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Dedication

It is our pleasure and great privilege to present the issue eighty-fifth of the Academic Journal of Research and Scientific Publishing to all researchers and professor who published their research in the issue, and we thank and appreciate to all contributors and supporters of the academic journal and those involved in the production of this scientific knowledge edifice.

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The Impact of The Green HRM Practice on The Employee Green Behaviors and Employee well-being (EmpWBng) in Saudi Arabia' Organizations

Ahmed Mohamed Ayesh Sarkhi

Master of Business Administration, King Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia

Email: ahmedmsarkhi@gmail.com

Abstract

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This study aims to examine the positive relationship between Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices and Employee Green Behavior (EGB). It also investigates whether EGB positively mediates the relationship between GHRM practices and employee well-being (EmpWBng). Additionally, the study explores whether gender moderates the relationship between GHRM practices and EGB.

A quantitative approach was adopted by collecting data from a diverse sample of employees working in small, medium, and large enterprises across various industries. Data were gathered through an online questionnaire, with a total sample size of 200 respondents.

Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS version 23 and AMOS version 23. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) were used to analyze demographic data. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to examine the relationships among variables and test the proposed hypotheses. This study contributes to the existing literature by providing evidence from a developing country context.

The results indicate that Hypothesis 1 (H1) is supported, whereas Hypotheses 2 and 3 (H2 and H3) are not supported, and based on the findings of this study, the author proposed several practical recommendations to enhance the effective implementation of Green HRM practices and strengthen their impact on employee green behavior and employee well-being.

Keywords: Green HRM, Employee Green Behavior (EGB), Employee Well-Being (EmpWBng)

1. Introduction

In recent years, organizations worldwide have increasingly adopted Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices to enhance employees' engagement in environmentally friendly behaviors. These practices include green recruitment, training, performance management, and employee involvement, all of which have been shown to influence both in-role and extra-role green behaviors among employees (Dumont et al., 2017; Hameed et al., 2020).

The effectiveness of GHRM practices in promoting green behavior is essential not only for achieving environmental sustainability goals but also for improving employee well-being (EmpWBng). Previous studies suggest that organizations implementing GHRM practices effectively experience enhanced environmental performance and higher levels of employee job satisfaction (Sabokro et al., 2021). Moreover, such practices contribute to the development of a green organizational identity, fostering a culture that encourages environmentally responsible behaviors (Zhu et al., 2021).

Furthermore, GHRM plays a critical role in shaping employees' psychological perceptions of their organization's environmental policies. This psychological engagement enhances employees' motivation to participate in green initiatives and supports the integration of sustainability into the organizational culture (Ye et al., 2022).

In this context, the present study aims to examine the impact of GHRM practices on Employee Green Behavior (EGB) and employee well-being (EmpWBng) within organizations in Saudi Arabia. The study seeks to provide contextual insights into how GHRM practices can be optimized to promote sustainable practices and a supportive work environment.

1.1. Research Questions:

- What is the impact of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices on Employee Green Behavior (EGB)?
- Does Employee Green Behavior (EGB) mediate the relationship between GHRM practices and employee well-being (EmpWBng)?
- Does gender moderate the relationship between GHRM practices and Employee Green Behavior (EGB)?

1.2. Research Objectives:

The main objectives of this study are:

- To examine the impact of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices on Employee Green Behavior (EGB).

- To investigate whether Employee Green Behavior (EGB) mediates the relationship between GHRM practices and employee well-being (EmpWBng).
- To examine the moderating role of gender in the relationship between GHRM practices and Employee Green Behavior (EGB).

1.3. Research Contributions

In recent years, research on Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has expanded significantly across various sectors, including tourism and hospitality, information technology, and the automotive industry. Despite this growing interest, there remains a need for further empirical investigation, particularly in developing country contexts.

This study contributes to the existing literature by proposing a conceptual model that examines the impact of GHRM practices on Employee Green Behavior (EGB). It also extends prior research by incorporating employee well-being (EmpWBng) as an outcome variable and gender as a moderating variable.

In addition, there is a relative scarcity of studies addressing GHRM practices in the context of Saudi Arabia. Therefore, this research provides valuable insights into how GHRM practices influence employee behavior and well-being within this specific context, contributing to a deeper understanding of sustainable HR practices in emerging economies.

2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

Companies are increasingly encouraged to adopt eco-friendly HR policies that cater to a growing number of environmentally conscious employees. Numerous organizations have begun integrating green HRM practices into their operations, prompting the HR department to also include environmental management practices to enhance employee development and overall well-being. The Saudi Arabia Vision 2030 emphasizes the importance of achieving a sustainable future globally. Saudi Arabia aims to improve the quality of life and protect future generations, both domestically and internationally. To achieve this objective, the Kingdom is collaborating with government ministries, private sector entities, and foreign leaders through dual green initiatives to identify and implement opportunities for accelerating climate action.¹

To underscore the increasing significance of people's well-being by stressing the necessity of ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages. Vision 2030 is transforming cities

¹ Saudi and Middle East green initiatives

https://www.greeninitiatives.gov.sa/?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwte-vBhBFEiwAQsv_xSmWXEAQAK9skR1fFv6wVi9han0OoA5LWZufl2cxwpESEFBb8Y5ZvxoCBesQAvD_BwE

and elevating the quality of life by introducing sustainable urban greening, which provides abundant green spaces and opportunities to connect with nature ².

The vision of Saudi Arabia also plans to plant ten million trees by 2030. Environmental Sustainability simply we can say that it involves creating strategies to reduce the environmental impact of organizations. and HR Practices is concerned with developing policies and practices to support environmental sustainability. Although there has been significant attention from both academics and practitioners on workplace well-being, the relationship between high performance HR practices (HPHRP) and employee well-being (EmpWBng) is still uncertain. HPHRP can be defined as a collection of progressive human resource management (HRM) practices, work structures, and procedures that, when implemented together, complement each other, and produce combined advantages (Yunus, et.al 2023). Although employee well-being (EmpWBng) may be influenced by many aspects, we focus on how individuals evaluate their lives (i.e., subjective well-being) (Diener, 2000; Diener et al., 1985). The evaluation of one is takes the form of cognition when he/she makes an informed evaluative judgement about his or her life satisfaction. Our conceptualization of employee well-being (EmpWBng) is consistent with the conventional well-being studies that emphasize evaluative and affective approaches (Kuykendall & Tay, 2015). The focus on “the various evaluations, positive and negative, is that people make of their lives, and the affective reactions of people to their experiences” (OECD, 2013: 29). The evaluative and affective approaches of employee well-being (EmpWBng) reflect the model used in HRM studies (Gyensare, et,al 2023).

2.1. Green HRM practices and EGB

Green HRM encompasses human resource practices that prioritize the promotion, adoption, and execution of environmentally sustainable practices within the workplace. This approach influences how organizations manage their employees and harness their skills. The implementation of green HRM practices can result in heightened efficiency, cost reduction, and the cultivation of a more favorable work environment that encourages sustainable employee conduct. The integration of green HRM practices, including green recruitment, green training, green performance management, green reward, and compensation, as well as green goal setting and other associated responsibilities, is expected to stimulate pro-environmental behavior (Gyensare, et al., 2023). EGB is paramount (Dumont et al., 2017; Fawehinmi et al., 2020; Islam et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2020). Studies have shown that the participation of employees is key to a successful EMS in an organization (Mazzi et al., 2016; Rubel

² Environment & Nature at Saudia Vision 2030.

<https://www.vision2030.gov.sa/en/progress/environment-nature/#:-:text=Vision%202030%20is%20transforming%20cities,opportunities%20to%20connect%20with%20nature.>

and Jones, 2016; Yong et al., 2020a; Islam et al., 2021a). Furthermore, EGB allows an organization to achieve a competitive advantage in terms of its environmental performance (Kim et al., 2019; Fawehinmi et al., 2020). Therefore, EGB carries more importance for the environmental performance of organizations for their sustainability and for sustainable society. Therefore, based on strong theoretical underpinnings and prior studies' recommendations on the need to explore underlying mechanisms of GHRM-performance outcomes, this study investigates the moderating role of GKS on the indirect influence of GHRM on green behavior via GC by employing the theoretical underpinnings of attitude theory (Bull, 1951) and social learning theory (Bandura, 1977; Bandura and Hall, 2018). Based on attitude theory (Bull, 1951), it has been suggested that GHRM affects green behavior through GC. Based on social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), it further suggested that employees who adopt organizations' GHRM initiatives and share green knowledge will also influence other members and can become a source of inspiration and can help the rest of the employees to adopt the same practices to become part of the members follow green practices and share green knowledge in the working relationship. This consequently has a positive impact on employees' learning with their environmental commitment and green behavior. Thus, attitude theory supports the mediating role of GC, while social learning theory supports GKS as a moderating variable in this study. Accordingly, the researcher suggests that.

Hypothesis 1. There is a positive relationship between green HRM practices and EGB.

2.2. The Mediating Role Played by Employee Green Behavior (EGB).

One of the primary goals of this research was to investigate how green HRM practices mediate the link between employee well-being (EmpWBng). The importance of employee well-being (EmpWBng) is to maintain the relationship with the employees and reduce employee turnover. In addition, to make the employees work without pressure and save them from job burning it is a side effect in both the employee health and the company cultures and atmosphere. Given that green HRM practices have been linked to EGB in previous studies (Dumont, J et al 2017). It has been assumed that green behavior could play a mediating role in this relationship. Green employee behavior reflects employees' willingness to engage in pro-environmental activities (Scherbaum et al., 2018). Some of the EGB, once he feels loyal to his workplace, is turning off lights when he leaves office, caring about company assets as he saves and protects his assets and home, reducing cost by writing on both paper faces, bringing his multi-use bottle and mug for his coffee to reduce the cost and the cup used for one time to reduce from the impact of effect in the environment. Supporting the organization's green strategy policy, commuting by bicycle, waste reduction, and developing new initiatives that protect the environment (Katz et al., 2022). A good leader must give the chance for their employees to make a balance between

their work, tasks, duty, and their personal life. If the staff feels he used all day for work purpose withing duty time and after duty that perhaps effectively on his balance in his life and effect in his relationship with his family, friends, and live balance. The researcher can call this a toxic work relationship that will destroy the staff in the medium and long terms. Even if the company pays more, they will not survive, and talented people can quit and any time to save their lives and look for peace (Silaban & Margaretha, 2021).

Studies suggested that since green HRM practices work regimes are implemented to enhance organizational performance, employers enact green HRM practices to elicit significant effort from employees due to reducing the workload and increasing the employee well-being and wellness for sustainability (El Dessouky & Alquaiti, 2020). Green HRM practices make work easier via training and coaching to employee well-being (EmpWBng) that can be built through training and practice and coaching by the leaders and influence people at the workplace. Also, the circular notice of HRM green and environment can increase staff awareness. Ignorance usually compromises well-being. Accordingly, the researcher suggests that (Ojo & Raman, 2019). The second hypothesis are suggested as the following:

Hypothesis 2. EGB mediates positively the relation between green HRM practices and employee well-being (EmpWBng).

2.3. Moderating Role of Gender

The Saudi Arabia vision 2030 too is the saving earth and make the earth day celebrate yearly at 27 at each year “Saudi Green Initiative Day”.³

Women are expected to be more caring, dependent, cultivated, and men are likely to be more aggressive and competitive. Studies have shown that women from different cultures have a sense of well-being to help in expressive, caring, nurturing and cooperative roles. On the contrary, men are more individualistic and competitive (Birindelli et al., 2019). It appears that people are associated with different roles depending on their gender (Kamau, 2020). Society tends to assign a home-maker role to women while men are assigned with a money-making role.

Davidson & Freudenburg (1996), stated that gender dissimilarities towards the environment are not the same everywhere around the world. Evolutionary psychology proposes a way to explain how gender differences affect individual behaviors (Hyde, 2014). Some scholars mentioned the importance of gender diversity in environmental issues. Some sociological researchers suggest that women’s

³ **Saudi Green Initiative Day.** <https://www.greeninitiatives.gov.sa/saudi-green-initiative-day-2024/index.html>

reproductive role is the reason why they care more about others and are more concerned by preserving the environment (Rand et al., 2016). Although there have been many studies examining the effects of gender on green behavior, to date, no agreement has yet been reached (Briscoe et al., 2019; QASIM, 2014). Hence, the present study considers the moderating effect of gender on the indirect relationship of CSR, environmental performance via pro-environmental behavior due to the fact that the socio-demographic factors have been identified as potential moderators, in the prior literature, between attitudes and behaviors (Burkhardt et al., 2020; Nhamo and Mukonza, 2020). Folberg & Kaboli-Nejad (2020) stated that the gender role is important to understand the different engagement of the employees with the environment protection which is, in turn dependent on the individuals' cultural background in this context, the authors have applied the social role theory and stated that women are more inclined to dis-cretionary behaviors than men. Therefore, women are more likely to be engaged in protecting the environment than men. The third suggested hypothesis is formulated as the following:

Hypothesis 3. Gender moderates the relationship between green HRM practices and EGB.

3. Research Method:

3.1. Study Context, Sample, And Data Collection:

The study is a quantitative explanatory, inferential study that adopts a cross-sectional quantitative approach to test the hypothesized effects of Green HRM practices on employee green behavior and employee well-being, including mediation and moderation effects.

The Primary data was gathered from employees employed in Saudi organizations. While the secondary data was from journals, books, newspapers, and online articles. The sample size is two hundred respondents. The questionnaire was short, clear, and easy to fill within 5-7 mins. It has two parts, the first part for the demographic questions, while the second part related to measuring the research variables and hypotheses. The populations are all the employee in the Saudi Arabia's organizations.

3.2. Measures:

As a result of the difficulty measuring character traits, Likert proposed a personality questionnaire, he created a scale that measures attitudes. A series of questions were used to measure attitudes in with five responses (Likert, 1932). In the data analysis process, a composite score/variable is derived from a series of four or more Likert-type items. A character trait can be quantified by combining the items (Boone & Boone, 2012).

3.2.1. Green HRM practices:

It has been measured this research variable by adopting the questionnaire items from the study (Tang et al., 2018). See the appendix.

3.2.2. *Employee green behavior (EGB):*

It has been measured this research variable by adopting the questionnaire items from the study (McConaughy, 2014). See the appendix.

3.2.3. *Employees' subjective well-being (EmpWBng):*

It has been measured this research variable by adopting the questionnaire items from the study (Pradhan & Hati, 2022). See the appendix.

3.3. Statistical Techniques for Data Analysis:

The data collected for this study were analyzed using SPSS version 23 and AMOS version 23 software, following the methodology outlined by Awang (2012). The following procedures were employed to validate the research hypotheses:

- **Internal Reliability:** Cronbach's Alpha (α) test was utilized to measure the internal consistency of the items within each construct.
- **Validity Assessment:** Pearson's correlation coefficient was employed to assess the validity of the measurement tools.
- **Structural Equation Modeling (SEM):** A second-generation technique, specifically SEM, was utilized to test the study's hypothetical model through path analysis.
- **Composite Reliability (CR):** A CR test was conducted to measure the reliability and internal consistency for latent constructs. A minimum requirement of $CR \geq 0.6$ was set to achieve composite reliability.
- **Item Reliability:** A test was conducted to assess the reliability of individual items. Reliability was achieved when the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was ≥ 0.7 , calculated in SPSS.
- **Average Variance Extracted (AVE):** AVE was calculated to determine the average percentage of variation explained by the measuring items for a construct. An $AVE \geq 0.5$ was required.

Discriminant Validity: Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. This criterion is met when the measurement model is devoid of redundant items, and the correlation between exogenous constructs is < 0.85

3.4. Research Model and Hypotheses

H1: There is a positive relationship between green HRM practices and EGB.

H2: EGB mediates positively the relation between green HRM practices and Employee well-being (EmpWBng).

H3: Gender moderates the relationship between green HRM practices and EGB.

The below figure explains the research hypotheses.

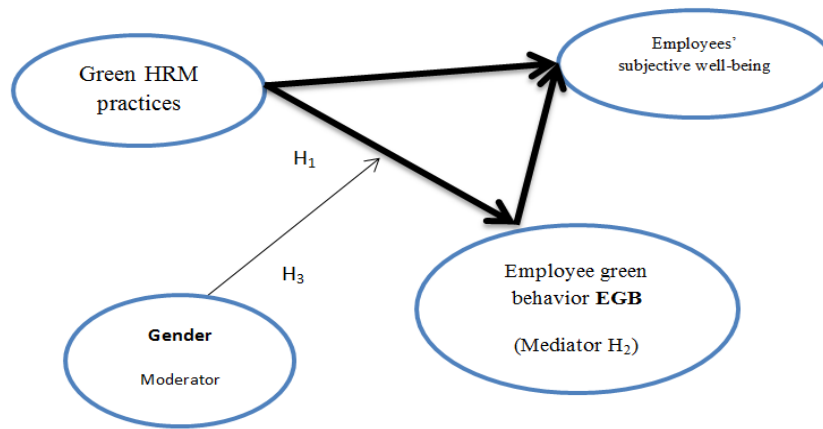


Figure 1: Research Proposed Model.

3.5. Tool Psychometric Properties:

3.5.1. Pilot Study:

In order to assess the validity and reliability of the study's measurement instrument, a pilot study was conducted with a separate group of participants distinct from the main sample. This preliminary investigation involved the participation of thirty individuals employed across various SMEs, medium-sized, and large firms in Saudi Arabia.

Validity

Validity, crucial in research, signifies how accurately a measurement captures the intended concept. Miller (2012) emphasizes its significance in ensuring that a measurement reflects the genuine essence of a concept, free from unintended attributes. To gauge the construct validity of the study instrument, Pearson correlation coefficients (r) were calculated between each item's score and its corresponding construct score. These correlations are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. The correlation relationship between the scores of items and their corresponding construct

| Dimensions | | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Green HRM Practices GHRMP | | Employee Green Behavior EGB | | Employee Well-Being EmpWBng | |
| No. of Item | Pearson C.C. | No. of Item | Pearson C.C. | No. of Item | Pearson C.C. |
| GHRMP1 | 0.931 | EGB1 | 0.797 | EmpWBng1 | 0.798 |

| | | | | | |
|--------|-------|------|-------|----------|-------|
| GHRMP2 | 0.935 | EGB2 | 0.941 | EmpWBng2 | 0.846 |
| GHRMP3 | 0.921 | EGB3 | 0.924 | EmpWBng3 | 0.887 |
| GHRMP4 | 0.949 | EGB4 | 0.887 | EmpWBng4 | 0.817 |

Statistically significant at level ($\alpha=0.01$)

As a result of the validity test, Table 1 illustrates that all Pearson correlations achieved statistical significance level of $\alpha=0.01$. Each item constructs a correlation with its respective construct score. The table indicates Pearson correlation coefficients (r) ranging from 0.797 to 0.949. These results robustly confirm the validity of the research instrument.

Reliability

The reliability of a measurement tool indicates the extent to which the measurement model accurately gauges the intended latent construct (Nunnally, 1978). Criteria for evaluating reliability proposed by Hinton et al. (2004) include excellent reliability (0.90 and above), high reliability (0.70-0.90), moderate reliability (0.50-0.70), and low reliability (below 0.50). In this study, reliability assessment was conducted for each study dimension using the Cronbach's Alpha test to estimate the questionnaire's consistency (Cronbach, 1951). Table 2 presents Cronbach's Alpha values for study constructs along with their corresponding interpretations of reliability.

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha test

| Dimension | No. of items | Cronbach's Alpha | Interpret |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|------------------|------------------|
| Green HRM Practices GHRMP | 4 | 0.951 | Excellent |
| Employee Green Behavior EGB | 4 | 0.908 | Excellent |
| Employee Well-Being EmpWBng | 4 | 0.847 | High |
| Overall reliability | 12 | 0.951 | Excellent |

Table 2 constructs that the overall reliability stands at 0.951, which falls within the "Excellent" range, signifying a commendable level of questionnaire reliability. Furthermore, the table indicates that the "GHRMP" construct exhibits the highest Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.951, indicating a "Excellent" level of reliability. In contrast, the "EmpWBng" constructs displays the lowest Cronbach's Alpha value at 0.847, which is still considered "High" These values provided in the table provide compelling evidence of the questionnaire's reliability.

3.6. Knowledge of Ethics in Academic Research

In this research, there is no plagiarism. All the citation are written with its references. Further, confidentiality is maintained.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS v.23 and AMOS v.23 software, employing a multi-faceted approach. Initial scrutiny of demographic data was done through frequencies and percentages. The core analysis utilized Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), a sophisticated technique, to explore correlations and causal impacts within the research framework, providing a comprehensive understanding of intricate relationships.

4.1. Analysis of Participant's Demographic Information

The findings from the collected data are explained using frequencies, percentages, and charts, providing a comprehensive overview of the respondent profile. A total of two hundred individuals constituted the sample size.

Table 3. Demographic characteristic of participants

| Variable | category | Frequency | % |
|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------|------|
| Gender | Male | 128 | 64 |
| | Female | 72 | 36 |
| Age | 25-34 | 49 | 24.5 |
| | 35-44 | 96 | 48 |
| | 45-54 | 20 | 10 |
| | 45+ | 35 | 17.5 |
| Education Level | High School / diploma degree | 15 | 7.5 |
| | University degree | 113 | 56.5 |
| | Master's degree | 53 | 26.5 |
| | Ph. D degree | 19 | 9.5 |
| Department | Marketing | 23 | 11.5 |
| | IT | 25 | 12.5 |
| | HR | 94 | 47 |
| | Other | 58 | 29 |

Table 3 illustrates that the gender distribution leans slightly towards males, comprising 64% of the sample, compared to 36% females. Regarding age, nearly half of the participants fall within the 35-44 age bracket (48%), followed by 24.5% aged 25-34. Additionally, there is a notable presence of participants aged forty-five and above, collectively accounting for 27.5% of the sample.

This diverse age range suggests a broad spectrum of experiences and perspectives among the participants, which could enrich the depth of insights garnered from the research. In terms of education level, the majority of participants have attained higher education qualifications. Specifically, 56.5% hold a university degree, while 26.5% possess a master's degree. Notably, 9.5% of participants have attained a Ph.D. degree. Lastly, the HR department comprises the largest proportion of participants at 47%, indicating a significant interest or involvement in human resources-related matters within the organizations. Other departments collectively make up 29.0% of the sample. The marketing and IT departments have comparatively lower representation at 11.5% and 12.5%, respectively. And Figure 2 is shown the final CFA model.

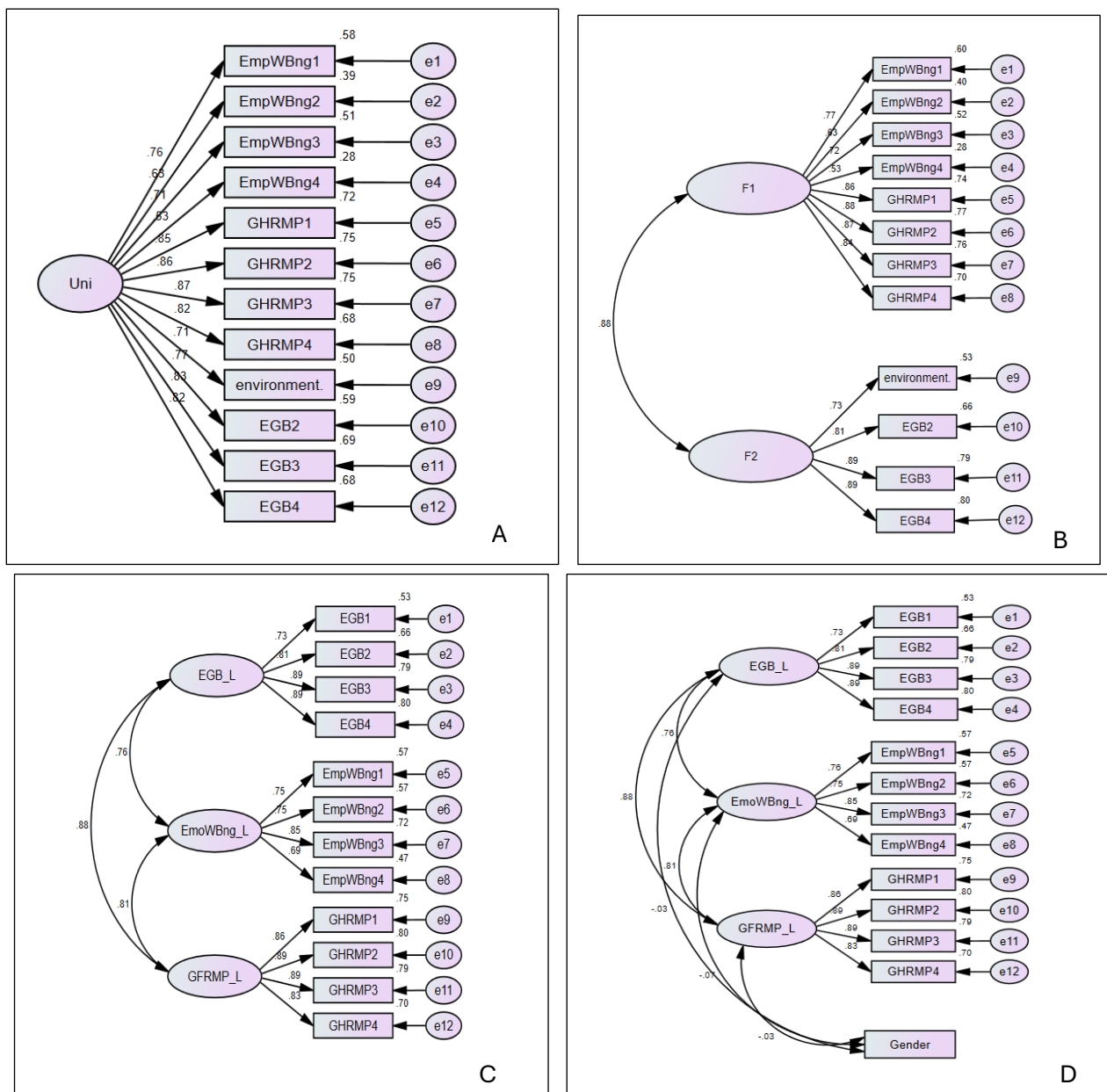


Figure 2: Final CFA models

Table 4: Common Method Bias Test for Study

| Measurement models | χ^2 | df | χ^2/df | SRMR | NNFI | CFI | RMSEA | AIC |
|--------------------------------|----------|----|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| Hypothesized four-factor model | 107.535 | 57 | 1.887 | 0.037 | 0.945 | 0.973 | 0.067 | 175.535 |
| Three-factor model | 137.727 | 51 | 2.701 | 0.053 | 0.929 | 0.954 | 0.092 | 191.727 |
| Two-factor model | 201.160 | 53 | 3.795 | 0.058 | 0.897 | 0.921 | 0.119 | 251.160 |
| One-factor model | 279.512 | 54 | 5.176 | 0.064 | 0.857 | 0.880 | 0.145 | 327.512 |

Note: N = 200.

At table 4 data whereas df, degrees of freedom; CFI, Comparative Fit Index; NNFI, Non-Normed Fit Index; RMSEA, Root Mean Square Error of approximation; SRMR, Standardized Root Means Square Residual. as Compared to the four-factor model. Three-factor model: independent (GHRMP), mediator (EGB) and dependent variable (EmpWBng). Two-factor model: (GHRMP, and EmpWBng), and mediator (EGB). One factor model: all variables were combined into one factor. $p < 0.001$.

4.2. Goodness of Fit Indices:

The information concerning the model goodness of fit category, their level of acceptance, and comments are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Index category and the level of acceptance for every index (Awang, 2012)

| Name of category | Name of index | Level of acceptance | Comments |
|------------------|---------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Absolute fit | Chisq | $P > 0.05$ | Sensitive to sample size >200 |
| Absolute fit | RMSEA | $RMSEA < 0.08$ | Range 0.05 to 0.1 is acceptable |
| Absolute fit | GFI | $GFI > 0.90$ | $GFI = 0.95$ is a good fit |
| Incremental fit | AGFI | $AGFI > 0.90$ | $AGFI = 0.95$ is a good fit |
| Incremental fit | CFI | $CFI > 0.90$ | $CFI = 0.95$ is a good fit |
| Incremental fit | TLI | $TLI > 0.90$ | $TLI = 0.95$ is a good fit |
| Incremental fit | NFI | $NFI > 0.90$ | $NFI = 0.95$ is a good fit |
| Parsimonious fit | Chisq/df | $Chi\ square/df < 5.0$ | The value should be less than 5.0. |

According to data in Table 5, the table presents the results of common method bias testing using structural equation modeling (SEM) for the study. Common method bias occurs when variance in the data is attributed to the measurement method rather than the constructs being measured. To assess the presence of common method bias, researchers typically compare different measurement models with varying factor structures. The hypothesized four-factor model, representing the proposed theoretical framework of the study, yields a chi-square (χ^2) value of 107.535 with 57 degrees of freedom (df), resulting in a χ^2/df ratio of 1.887. Additionally, the model demonstrates excellent fit indices, with a Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) of 0.053, Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) of 0.945, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of 0.973, and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) of 0.067. The Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) value for this model is 175.535. These fit indices collectively suggest a good fit of the hypothesized four-factor model to the data. Comparing the hypothesized four-factor model to alternative models, it is evident that the four-factor model outperforms the three-factor, two-factor, and one-factor models. Specifically, the three-factor, two-factor, and one-factor models exhibit higher χ^2 values, indicating poorer model fit. Additionally, these models yield inferior fit indices across all metrics compared to the hypothesized four-factor model. Notably, the one-factor model, where all variables are combined into a single factor, demonstrates the poorest fit among all models tested.

These findings suggest that the hypothesized four-factor model provides the most parsimonious and theoretically meaningful representation of the data. The excellent fit indices, coupled with the significant improvement in model fit compared to alternative models, lend support to the validity and robustness of the proposed theoretical framework. Furthermore, the low chi-square value relative to degrees of freedom, along with the favorable SRMR, NNFI, CFI, and RMSEA values, indicate minimal common method bias in the data, reinforcing the credibility of the study's findings.

4.3. Measurement Model Assessment:

Table 6. Loading Factors for The Measurement Model.

| Details of the multi-item constructs | Loading factor > 0.5 |
|---|-------------------------|
| Green HRM practices (Tang et al., 2018): $\alpha = 0.925$. CR = 0.926; AVE = 0.758 | |
| 1. We develop training programs in environment management to increase environmental awareness, skills, and expertise of employees | 0.865 |

| | |
|--|--------------|
| 2. In our firm, managers are set objectives on achieving green outcomes included in appraisals | 0.893 |
| 3. We offer practices for employees to participate in environment management, such as newsletters, suggestion schemes, problem-solving groups, low-carbon champions, and green action teams. | 0.887 |
| 4. We use green performance indicators in our performance management system and appraisals | 0.836 |
| Employee green behavior (Mcconnaughy, 2014): $\alpha = 0.898$. | |
| CR = 0.9; AVE = 0.693 | |
| 1. When there is a choice, choose products that are better for the environment. | 0.728 |
| 2. I help in implementing new policies that reduce the company's impact on the environment. | 0.812 |
| 3. I discuss environmentally related topics with other employees. | 0.887 |
| 4. I monitor the environmental impact of workplace processes. | 0.893 |
| Employee well-being (EmpWBng). (Pradhan & Hati, 2022): $\alpha = 0.823$. | |
| CR = 0.844; AVE = 0.611 | |
| 1. My organization's commitment to hiring and selecting employees who are dedicated to environmental sustainability enhances my well-being at work. | 0.877 |
| 2. My work achievement often acts as a source of motivation. | 0.708 |
| 3. I am an optimistic person. | 0.861 |
| 4. I am a confident person | 0.657 |

Fit indices: $\chi^2(df) = 107.535(57)$; $p < 0.01$; $RMSEA = 0.067$; $SRMR = 0.037$; $TLI = 0.963$; $CFI = 0.973$; $GFI = 0.924$. *df*, degrees of freedom; *RMSEA*, root mean square error of approximation; *SRMR*, standardized root means square residual; *TLI*, Tucker–Lewis index. ^aFixed to the value of 1.00.

In the above table 6. the discriminant validity ensures that a measure accurately identifies and separates different constructs by showing minimal correlation with unrelated measures. It confirms that each measure captures unique aspects of its intended construct without interference from others. Various statistical techniques, like confirmatory factor analysis, are used to assess discriminant validity. In

Table 7. below, discriminant validity is confirmed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, where each construct's diagonal values exceed all others within the same column, indicating clear differentiation between constructs.

Table 7. Discriminant validity (Fornell -Larcker criterion)

| | | | |
|----------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| | EmpWBng | EGB | GFRMP |
| EmpWBng | 0.882 | | |
| EGB | 0.746 | 0.883 | |
| GFRMP | 0.818 | 0.879 | 0.871 |

5. Hypotheses Testing

5.1. Causal Relationships

To examine the (cause relationship) between the study constructs (EmpWBng, EGB, and GFRMP) AMOS v.23 software used. Figure 3 shows path model with cause’s relationship. Table 7 shows results summary for hypotheses testing.

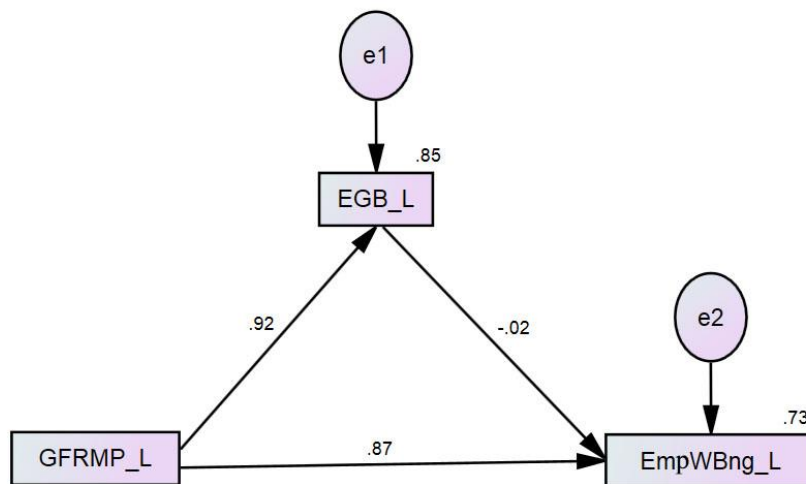


Figure 3. Path model (Causal relationships)

Table 8. Results summary for hypotheses testing (Direct effect)

S.C.: standardized coefficients

| H. No. | Paths (Hypothesis relationship) | | | Estimate S.C. | Accepted\Rejected |
|----------------|---------------------------------|---|-------|---------------|-------------------|
| H ₁ | GHRMP_L | → | EGB_L | 0.924 | Accepted |

Testing first Hypothesis H_1 states (There is a positive relationship between green HRM practices and EGB).

Table 8 shows that that there is positive impact for Green HRM practices GHRMP_L Employee green behavior EGB_L. This impact is statistically significant, since (p-value < 0.05) and path coefficient is positive 0.0.924 (H_1 is accepted).

5.2. Mediation Testing – EGB_L As the Mediator

The mediation analysis was performed, considering GHRMP_L as independent variable, employee well-being (EmpWBng). EmpWBng_L as the dependent variable, and EGB_L as the mediator. This analysis followed Baron and Kenny's (1986) classical approach, focusing on indirect effects. The researcher conducted the mediation analysis utilizing direct and indirect effects through bootstrap procedures with ten thousand samples, along with bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals set at 95%. Detailed results can be found in Table 9.

Table 9. shows that “EGB_L” does not affect the relation between GHRMP_L and EmpWBng_L; (H2 is not accepted).

| H. No. | Path (Relationship) | Total Effects | Direct Effects | Indirect Effects | Result |
|----------------|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|---------------------|
| H ₂ | GHRMP_L > EGB_L > EmpWBng_L | 0.854 | 0.870 | -0.016 | Mediator not effect |

5.3. Moderation Testing

The moderation analysis is conducted by treating GHRMP_L as independent variable, EGB_L as dependent variable, and gender as moderator variable. The results are calculated by creating interaction terms from standardized score of variables using SPSS. Before testing a multi-group analysis of gender (male and female) as a moderator, we need to ensure the stability of the measurement model (we need to assess that the measurement of the constructs is the same for both groups). Constructive invariance was tested by creating two separate models (male and female) and then comparing model fit based on estimation of two groups freely, i.e., without constraints. Goodness-of-fit indices matching results showed the following for structural weight: $\chi^2(df) = 0.331 (1)$; $p = 0.565 > 0.05$; RMSEA = 000; CFI = 1; GFI = 0.999. This result shows that there is not a statistically significant between males and females since $p > 0.05$.

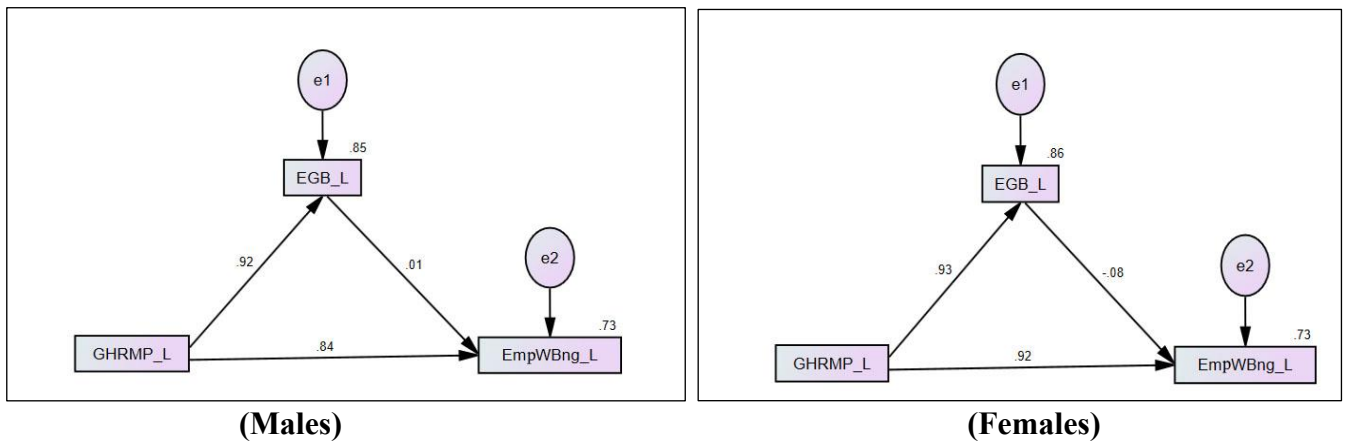


Figure 4. Path model (moderator = gender)

The results depicted in Figure 4 indicate that the independent variable (GHRMP_L) has an effect on the dependent variable (EGB_L) with a β coefficient of 0.92 when the gender is female. Similarly, it affects the dependent variable with a β coefficient of 0.93 when the gender is male. However, it is important to note that these results are not statistically significant (H3 is not accepted).

Table 10. Descriptive statistics and correlation among key constructs

| | Mean | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------------------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|------|------|---|
| Age | - | - | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Department | - | - | .100 | 1 | | | | | | |
| Experience | - | - | .092 | .035 | 1 | | | | | |
| Education Level | - | - | .029 | -.184 | .040 | 1 | | | | |
| Employees Total No | - | - | -.068 | .103 | .034 | .065 | 1 | | | |
| Employee Green Behavior | 3.49 | 1.104 | -.065 | -.034 | .006 | -.023 | -.006 | 1 | | |
| Employee Well-Being (EmpWBng) | 3.63 | 0.892 | -.043 | -.089 | .011 | .034 | -.066 | .685 | 1 | |
| Green HRM Practices | 3.70 | 1.06 | .007 | -.032 | .073 | -.023 | -.070 | .806 | .730 | 1 |

Note: $N = 200, p < 0.05$.

Table 10 reveals the correlations among key constructs. Age displays a weak positive correlation with department and experience, while showing no significant correlation with other variables. The department exhibits a weak positive correlation with age and a weak negative correlation with education level. Experience also demonstrates weak positive correlations with age and department. Education level showcases a weak negative correlation with department. Conversely, the total number of employees does not exhibit significant correlations with other variables.

Employee green behavior displays weak negative correlations with age and employee well-being (EmpWBng). However, employee well-being (EmpWBng) demonstrates a moderate positive correlation with employee green behavior.

Lastly, Green HRM practices show moderate positive correlations with education level, employee well-being (EmpWBng), and employee green behavior. These findings highlight the interrelationships among the variables, suggesting nuanced associations within the context of the study. The collected data was analyzed through SEM analysis. Results showed that the hypotheses (H2 and H3) are not satisfied, while the hypothesis (H1) are satisfied.

6. Conclusion and Discussion and Implications:

- Discussion of Hypothesis 1 (H1)

The analysis revealed that Hypothesis 1 was accepted, indicating a strong positive relationship between green HRM practices and employee green behavior. The standardized coefficient (0.924) significantly supports the assertion that implementing green HRM practices effectively enhances green behaviors among employees. This impact is statistically significant, since (p -value < 0.05) and path coefficient is positive 0.0.924 (*H₁ is accepted*).

Supporting Studies:

Dumont et al., (2017) This study confirms that green HRM practices can positively influence employee workplace green behavior through mechanisms such as psychological green climate and employee green values, aligning with the current findings. Zhang et al., (2019). Their research, which highlights the positive effects of green HRM practices on both in-role and extra-role environmental behaviors among employees, supports the conclusion that green HRM practices are instrumental in promoting sustainable employee actions.

Contrasting Studies:

Hameed et al., (2020) While acknowledging the importance of green HRM, this study emphasized the mediating role of personal green values and organizational culture, suggesting a more nuanced relationship that could moderate the direct impact of HRM practices. Renwick et al., (2013) They suggested that the impact of green HRM on green behavior might be moderated by other organizational factors such as management support and policy frameworks, indicating a potential complexity not directly addressed by the initial hypothesis.

- Discussion of Hypothesis 2 (H2)

The results from the mediation analysis indicate that *Hypothesis 2 was not accepted*. The analysis showed a strong total effect (0.854) and a significant direct effect (0.649) of GHRMP on EmpWBng.

However, the indirect effect through EGB was negligible (-0.016), suggesting that EGB does not act as a mediator in the relationship between green HRM practices and employee well-being (EmpWBng).

Supporting Studies:

Gilal et al. (2019), found that while green HRM practices do influence organizational citizenship behaviors aimed at the environment, which in turn could contribute to employee satisfaction, the mediating effects of green behaviors on well-being were not substantial, mirroring the findings of this analysis. Dumont, et al., (2017), highlighted the direct influence of green HRM on employee outcomes such as job satisfaction and engagement, rather than a mediated effect through green behaviors, which supports the direct relationship observed in this study.

Contrasting Studies:

Renwick et al., (2013), proposed that green HRM impacts employee outcomes including well-being through enhanced engagement in sustainability initiatives, suggesting a potential mediating role of green behavior. Ye et al. (2022), suggested that green behaviors play a crucial mediating role in how green HRM practices influence overall employee well-being (EmpWBng), emphasizing the importance of individual employee actions and their perceptions of corporate sustainability efforts.

- Discussion of Hypothesis 3 (H3)

The analysis aimed to test whether gender differences influence the effectiveness of green HRM practices in fostering employee green behavior. The results, however, showed no statistically significant difference in the relationship between GHRMP and EGB when moderated by gender, with p-values exceeding 0.05. The moderation analysis was conducted using a multi-group approach to test the structural weights for males and females separately, which revealed similar effects across genders.

Thus, H3 is not supported.

Supporting Studies:

Davidson & Freudenburg (1996), this study found that gender differences in environmental attitudes are not uniformly significant across different cultures and contexts, which aligns with the finding that gender does not significantly moderate the relationship between GHRMP and EGB in the current study. Folberg & Kaboli-Nejad (2020), their research on gender differences in environmental engagement also suggested that while there may be variations in environmental concern between genders, these do not necessarily translate into significant differences in green behavior in the workplace.

Contrasting Studies:

Birindelli et al. (2019), suggested that women in leadership positions tend to incorporate more sustainable practices within organizations, which might indicate a potential for gender to influence

environmental initiatives differently than what was found in this study. Rand et al. (2016), argued that gender roles, particularly in terms of societal and reproductive roles, could influence environmental behavior differently, suggesting that gender might have a moderating effect in certain contexts.

6.2. Implications for Future Research and Practice

Future studies could explore other potential mediating variables, such as organizational culture, leadership styles, or individual environmental values, to better understand the pathways through which green HR management impacts employee well-being. They could also consider additional adjusting factors: given the lack of a statistically significant adjusting effect of gender, researchers should consider other demographic and psychological factors that may influence the effectiveness of green HR management practices, such as age, education level, or personal values. Furthermore, developing a comprehensive model that incorporates additional variables and tests alternative models could provide deeper insights into how green HR management practices affect both employee well-being and satisfaction. This could include longitudinal studies to assess the long-term effects of green HR management practices on organizational outcomes, HR practitioners should also continue to implement and improve green HR management practices, ensuring they are integrated into the organizational culture and aligned with broader sustainability goals. Training programs should emphasize the importance of sustainability and provide employees with practical tools to engage in environmentally friendly behaviors.

6.3. Applications & Contributions

The results of this research are relevant for employees at the organizations in Saudi Arabia. It can help them to better understand the important factors that affect their well-being, green HRM practices, and their green behavior. Additionally, the research findings offer managers and organizations an understanding of the relationship between the research variables. This study allows them to effectively enhance the GHRM.

Moreover, the indirect influence of GHRM on green behavior via GC (Green Commitment) by employing the theoretical underpinnings of attitude theory (Bull, 1951) and social learning theory (Bandura, 1977; Bandura and Hall, 2018). Based on attitude theory, we suggest that GHRM affects green behavior through GC. Based on social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), it has been suggested that employees who adopt organizations' GHRM initiatives and share green knowledge will also influence other members and can become a source of inspiration and can help the rest of the employees to adopt the same practices to become part of the members follow green practices and share green knowledge in the working relationship. This consequently has a positive impact on employees'

learning with their environmental commitment and green behavior (Khan, K et. al, 2022). This theory explains that learning in a social environment can occur through instructions or observations without direct reinforcement, as it is a cognitive process. Following the principles of social learning theory, the researcher proposes that employees who embrace the company's green initiatives and impart their environmental knowledge will serve as role models, motivating their colleagues to adopt sustainable workplace practices. This leads to a beneficial impact on employees' learning, environmental dedication, and sustainability actions (Abbas et al., 2021).

The following applications are as the following:

- Enhancing Employee Engagement and Sustainability Practices: The research suggests that integrating Green HRM practices can significantly enhance employee engagement in green behaviors. This application is critical for organizations looking to improve their environmental footprint and promote sustainability through employee involvement (Dumont et al., 2017).
- Improving Employee well-being (EmpWBng): The findings indicate that Green HRM practices have a positive impact on employee well-being (EmpWBng) by creating a work environment that reduces stress and enhances job satisfaction. This is particularly important for organizations aiming to maintain high levels of employee morale and productivity (Zhu et al., 2021).
- Fostering a Green Organizational Identity: By adopting Green HRM practices, organizations can develop a strong green identity that aligns with global sustainability goals. This application helps in building a positive public image and supports marketing strategies that emphasize corporate social responsibility (Ye et al., 2022).
- Supporting Gender Equality and Inclusion: The research explores the moderating role of gender, suggesting that organizations can use Green HRM to support diversity and inclusion policies. This application not only enhances the effectiveness of environmental policies but also promotes gender equality within the (Davidson & Freudenburg, 1996).

7. Recommendations:

Based on the findings of this study, several practical recommendations are proposed to enhance the effective implementation of Green HRM practices and strengthen their impact on employee green behavior and employee well-being as follows:

- Organizations should develop awareness programs and internal communication strategies to reduce employees' and managers' resistance to the adoption of Green HRM practices. Such initiatives can help clarify the benefits of green policies and enhance employees' acceptance of sustainability-oriented changes.

- Organizations are also encouraged to establish clear indicators and measurement tools to evaluate the impact of Green HRM practices on environmental outcomes, employee green behavior, and employee well-being. This would help justify investments in Green HRM and support continuous improvement based on reliable data.
- Furthermore, organizations should promote a sustainability-oriented organizational culture by embedding environmental values into daily work practices, leadership behavior, and HR policies. This can support long-term behavioral change and encourage employees to adopt green behaviors at work.
- It is also recommended that organizations allocate sufficient financial and managerial resources for the gradual implementation of Green HRM practices, especially in small and medium-sized enterprises where cost constraints may limit adoption.

Finally, organizations should invest in comprehensive training and development programs to improve employees' knowledge of green practices and strengthen their engagement in sustainable workplace behaviors.

8. Limitations:

This research has provided valuable insights into the impact of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices on employee green behaviors (EGB) and well-being within organizations in Saudi Arabia. However, several limitations need to be acknowledged, which also open avenues for future research:

1. **Sample and Generalizability:** The data was collected from employees within a limited range of industries and companies in Saudi Arabia. This may restrict the generalizability of the findings across different sectors and cultural contexts. Future studies could expand the sample to include a wider range of industries and geographic locations to enhance the external validity of the results.
2. **Cross-sectional Design:** The study's cross-sectional design limits the ability to infer causal relationships. Longitudinal research could provide deeper insights into the dynamics of how GHRM practices influence EGB and employee well-being (EmpWBng) over time.
3. **Self-reported Measures:** The reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias, such as social desirability bias, which could affect the accuracy of the responses. Future research could incorporate objective measures or third-party assessments to validate the self-reported data.
4. **Moderating Variables:** While this study explored gender as a moderating variable, it did not find significant effects. Future research might explore other potential moderators, such as age, education level, or organizational role, which could influence the effectiveness of GHRM practices.

5. Mediating Mechanisms: The study hypothesized mediating effects of EGB on the relationship between GHRM practices and employee well-being (EmpWBng), which were not supported by the data. Investigating alternative mediators, such as organizational commitment or job satisfaction, might provide new insights into the pathways through which GHRM practices affect employee outcomes.
6. Broader Environmental Impacts: The research primarily focused on individual-level outcomes. Future studies could also examine the broader environmental impacts of GHRM practices, such as reductions in carbon footprints and waste, to provide a holistic view of the sustainability contributions of these practices.
7. Qualitative Insights: Qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, could be employed in future research to gain deeper insights into the perceptions and attitudes of employees regarding GHRM practices. This could help uncover underlying reasons for the observed behaviors and provide a richer context to the quantitative findings.

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10. Appendix:

General information

- Age: (18-24) (25-34) (35-44) (45-54) (55+)
- Gender: Male / Female
- Department: (e.g., Marketing, IT, HR)
- Job Title: (e.g., Marketing Manager, Software Developer, HR Specialist)

Employee Well-Being (Pradhan & Hati, 2022).

Please rate your agreement with the following statements (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree)

- 1- My organization's commitment to hiring and selecting employees who are dedicated to environmental sustainability enhances my well-being at work.
- 2- My work achievement often acts as a source of motivation.
- 3- I am an optimistic person.
- 4- I am a confident person.

Employee Green Behavior (Mcconnaughy, 2014).

- 1- When there is a choice, choose products that are better for the environment.
- 2- I Help in implementing new policies that reduce the company's impact on the environment.
- 3- I Discuss environmentally related topics with other employees.
- 4- I Monitor the environmental impact of workplace processes.

Green HRM Practices (Tang et al., 2018).

- 1- We develop training programs in environment management to increase environmental awareness, skills, and expertise of employees.
- 2- In our firm, managers are set objectives on achieving green outcomes included in appraisals.

- 3- We offer practices for employees to participate in environment management, such as newsletters, suggestion schemes, problem-solving groups, low-carbon champions, and green action teams.
- 4- We use green performance indicators in our performance management system and appraisals.

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The Serial killer, Policing and Medical Discourses in Jim Thompson's Crime Fiction

Maysaa Husam Jaber

Ph.D. in English Literature, Scientific Research Commission, Baghdad, Iraq

Email: maysaa.h.jaber@src.edu.iq

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Abstract:

This paper aims to examine the psychological profile of the serial killer in Jim Thompson's crime fiction in relation to policing and criminological approaches to crime in Cold War America, on the one hand, and the medical discourses on serial murder, on the other. By examining the representation of the serial killer in Thompson's 1964 novel, *Pop. 1280*, this paper explores the interplay between the sociocultural critique of criminality and policing that Thompson's crime narrative delivers and the portrayal of the pathology of the serial killer. It is argued here that Thompson's novel, via the dramatization of a small-town policeman serial killer, showcases the shift in criminological discourses on crime and serial murder and the sociocultural anxieties during the Cold war in America, and at the same time subverts and challenges the genre conventions, hence carving a new lane for the serial killer narrative in the crime fiction genre. This paper will thus highlight how Thompson presents a case study of serial murder as a new subgenre of hardboiled crime fiction, and how the multilayered and complicated discourses on crime and policing in American culture at that time are connected to the serial killer narrative and the pathology of the criminal as key ingredients of American crime fiction of the Cold War era.

Keywords: Jim Thompson, the serial killer, hardboiled crime fiction, policing, the Cold War

1. Introduction

Jim Thompson portrays darker and grittier hardboiled narratives than those of his predecessors such as Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett. His fiction announces a new era of hardboiled writing characterized by extremes, unreliable narration and the introduction of the serial killer. Thompson destabilizes and indeed reinvents the hardboiled genre perhaps more than any crime writer of that time. By breaking the unity and totality of the crime narrative and presenting texts that constantly challenge the status quo and explore the pathology of criminals and its correlation to law enforcement and policing, Thompson's work subverts the traditional understanding of crime fiction. Thompson develops the serial killer subgenre by shifting focus from the detective to the criminal, from the investigation to the pathology of the criminal. Thompson's work, which can be regarded "as social criticism, as sinister postmodern documentary" (Lee, 2003, 44), also succeeds in capturing a compelling parallelism between legal, medical and literary discourses in America. Shedding light on the criminals' mental state and their narrative voice, Thompson brings to the forefront the complexities and intricacies of the anxieties and unease of Cold War America.

Thompson, who created "first-person narrators, baleful descendants of the hardboiled

Heroes" shifted the "autonomous status and maverick ethics of the principal character into a source of pure menace" (Lee, 2003, 43). His fiction exemplifies the hardboiled world depicted in the genre but in an extreme form. Thompson excels in portraying the corruption, violence and paranoia that characterize the postwar American milieu. He creates flawed heroes— violent criminals who at the same time serve as small-town policemen, hence muddying the lines between law enforcement and crime. By so doing, Thompson's fiction establishes a link between "masculine heroism and the criminal underworld" (Malin, 2010, p.376)— his fictional world is so violent and chaotic that it challenges the boundaries of the genre and its main tenants of control and containment. Thompson demystifies the very premise on which detective fiction relies, namely, the resolution of crime by writing stories that do not provide a sense of contentment or relief for his readers, nor do these stories offer any closure. Instead, Thompson's fiction destabilizes any sense of containment and instead provokes anxieties. By creating villains, especially ruthless serial murderers, Thompson outlines alternative powerful crime stories, ones that disregard detection and make room for the psychology of crime and policing, stipulating more questions than answers.

Thompson is one of the most well-known crime writers in mid-twentieth century whose works left a mark on the genre as a whole. Thompson started as a proletarian writer and turned to crime fiction towards the end of the 1940s. His first novel, *Nothing More than Murder* came out in 1949, while the period from 1952 to 1954 was a time of intense writing that produced eleven crime novels. He wrote

mostly paperback originals with Lion Books (Cassuto 2009, p.126). However, Thompson's career saw fluctuations that probably reflect the shifts in the social milieu especially around the publishing industry. Thompson was not well-accredited during his life, yet his crime stories crystallize the transformations in crime narratives in the postwar period. His novels, *The Killer Inside Me* (1952), *Savage Night* (1953), *A Hell of a Woman* (1954) and *Pop. 1280* (1964), establish a dystopian worldview that renders a sense of hopelessness. It is also a world governed by power relations where characters struggle with impulses and desires and often transgress legal, social, and moral boundaries.

Thompson's crime fiction is full of contradictions and opposites. It presents blurry lines between sanity and madness, good and evil, justice and injustice, innocence and guilt. In one novel after another, he presents the puzzle and challenge of dualism; how one concept or idea stands against another. Thompson's work often shows tantalizing relations between opposite forces on the two ends of a continuum, and it also displays dualities within (*inside*) his characters. There is a moral ambiguity in how his characters navigate these dualisms. In the words of Michael McCauley, “rich and poor, appearance and reality, right and wrong, good and evil seemed to Thompson not so much polar opposites as a matter of power and perspective, on both a societal and a personal scale” (1991, p. 31).

The conflict between good and evil is front and center in Thompson's work especially in his serial killer novels. His work begs questions about human nature, crime and what constitutes evil, but it is not a simple case of categorizing and labelling criminals. As Dorothy Clark explains, Thompson in *The Killer Inside Me*, which presents his first serial killer policeman, reveals a “powerful early postmodern representation of evil – one that reflects the moral catastrophe of WWII and is proleptic of current philosophical discussions” (2005, p. 17). Similarly, in *Pop1280*, the tension between reality and appearance is a key concern in a story told by a serial killer protagonist. This showcases a “a world morally devastated” – one that masks corruption, and renders Thompson's narratives as proposing and at the same time ironically rejecting all “Grand Narratives about evil in the human character” (Clark, 2005, p.18). Thompson uses ‘evil’ characters against the postwar culture to expose how “woefully coherent, and uninformative, our modern narratives about evil really are” (Clark, 2005, p. 27).

Focusing on the discourses on crime, evil and insanity, this paper investigates the correlation between the representations of the serial killer and policing as a dominant force that manifests itself in various avenues narratively and technically in Thompson's work. This paper argues that Thompson's crime fiction destabilizes the correlation between the serial killer, law enforcement and policing, on the one hand, and the medical discourses on insanity and serial murder, on the other. By creating the persona of a serial killer policeman in small-town America, Thompson exposes the sociocultural anxieties and at the same time subverts the law and order and policing discourses of postwar America.

His fiction does not reinforce the binaries in a way that conforms to a patriarchal hegemonic society; rather it leaves more room to question and shake the fixity of any perceived realities and forces in play in his fictional world. Examining the serial killer in *Pop1280*, this paper explores how Thompson presents a case study of serial murder, policing, and the pathology of the criminal, and how these complex (and contradictory) connections dictate serial murder and the pathology of the serial killer as key elements of crime fiction of that period more generally. Through the disturbing presence of the serial killer, Thompson depicts the horrors of living in small towns, hence problematizing the ordinariness of everyday reality. It is also argued here that through his unique treatment of dualism both within the boundaries of the fictional narratives and extending to the sociocultural and political contexts, Thompson's work subverts and reimagines the conventions of the crime narrative in how it launches a new trend in crime fiction that is “filled with monsters, real and imaginary” (Haut 1995, p.46). This culture of monstrosity (which is associated with the Cold War period) comprises complex layers of paradoxes and contradictions shown in the way Thompson’s work addresses the discourses on legality, policing and justice, as well as how it presents the convoluted psychology of the characters, especially that of the serial killer.

2. Thompson’s Cold War fictional world and the question of evil

Described as a “dimestore Dostoevsky” (O’Brien, 1997, p.150), Thompson delves into the human psyche and the conflict both within the self and with others. His work offers a vision that exposes “the big lie of capitalism as manifested in its most deadly form—the split souls of psychotic, doomed pursuers of the American Dream” (McCauley 1991: 31). Thompson explores the American postwar context addressing and indeed deconstructing the pieces that constituted a multilayered reality of the 1950s and 1960s America. What Dorothy Clark describes as “postmodern uncertainty” of evil was brought about by the calamities of the post-World War reality. Thompson “captures this condition and unveils a world in which making meaning becomes both imperative and impossible” (Clark 2005, p.17). The crime fiction formula also facilitates the paradoxes that dictate the way Thompson’s narratives represent “both the desire and impossibility of making sense” (Clark, 2005, p.18). Additionally, Thompson’s use of the subgenre of the serial killer allows for an investigation into the questions of what constitutes evil and the pathology of the murderer against a multitude of psychological, sociocultural and legal factors.

This paper will thus engage Phillip Cole's *The Myth of Evil* (2006) which addresses the paradox of evil and the question of “whether there can be a secular conception of evil, whether that idea can tell us anything about the human condition” (2006, p. 1). Cole argues that monsters do not exist in reality, only in fiction. To Cole, there is no purely evil person— only a “fictional villain” is depicted as evil,

and the “more deeply the fictional villain is explored, in genuinely revealing and moving works of literature, the less easy it becomes to regard them as agents of pure evil – they become, like Faust himself, ambivalent, impure figures” (Cole, 2006, p.55). However, Cole acknowledges that evil is a human capacity proposing that people are able to inflict pain and suffering on others, and adds that the fundamental question is one of explanation, and whether the concept of evil can play any constructive or useful role in explaining human action. Is ‘because she was evil’ ever an explanation, even a partial one? (Cole 2006, 18).

Cole's theorization about the possibilities of evil is interesting, especially his dualistic position on evil, which this paper suggests is personified in the figure of serial killer. The play between the “fictional villain” and the real one is also of interest to this paper as it proposes that the serial killer navigates these connections and tensions, hence the positioning of the serial killer becomes essential to read reality in America at the time. It is also noteworthy to mention the traditional approach to studying evil entails that evil is a force that generates monstrous acts, while the “enlightened” approach dismisses evil to some people with mental illness and other factors that diminishes agency. Dismissing both traditional and the so-called enlightened approach to evil, Cole proposes that evil is a “myth”—a construction that people created and asserts that evil is “something to be feared, and historically [...] it is the enemy within who has been seen as representing the most intense evil of all – the enemy who looks just like us, talks like us, and is just like us” (2006, p.2). This paper interrogates some of the key notions that Cole addresses such as the “enemy within” which is crucial to examine the serial killer and the culture of monstrosity that Thompson establishes in his work. The argument that evil introduces a moral dualism, a binary opposition, which represents the divide between good and evil, is also relevant to the examination of crime and policing during the turbulent sociocultural and political context of the Cold War. This context of McCarthyism, paranoia along with draconian policing is the background against which Thompson’s text can be read, as the next section will illustrate.

3. McCarthyism, policing and the serial killer narrative

The Cold War, which began in the aftermath of the Second World War, changed the fabric of American society. The tension between capitalism and communism fostered a cultural, social and political divide that tore through America at the time. Fear, suspicion and paranoia dominated people’s lives with a growing security challenge and a concern for subversion. The rhetoric of the “Red Scare” dictated an updated, if not draconian criminal justice system and policing that ruled American cities with an iron fist. The fear of communism launched what is known as the “McCarthy era” which brought about a number of sociocultural and political anxieties and was characterized by an unsubstantiated suspicion of disloyalty and a constant suppression of freedoms and rights with a

growing counter movement that called for subversion. The “conflicts and quarrels of that era” produced “profoundly new, and often unsettling, perspectives and values that shaped the content and tone of public discourse” (Latzer, 2016, p.103). This entailed a pursuit of perceived threats, which was often followed by incarcerations and arrests. Additionally, rates of crime increased, especially in urban areas and with new policing strategies, there were drastic changes to policing and criminal justice agencies. As Barry Latzer questions:

Did Americans suffer through the most protracted and disturbing violent crime rise in over 100 years because they had become embittered and hostile toward one another, had their faith in authority figures shattered, or had lost all “hope of winning respect by legitimate means”? (Latzer, 2016, pp.103-4).

The strive for safety and the elimination of threats imposed a pressure to rethink the concept of policing, hence changes impacted police departments and the legal system more widely. For example, Harlan Haun and Judson Jeffries (2003) draw attention to the tension between the police and the public, which police reform in the postwar period ignored. William Westley also points to the violence committed at the hands of police officers which was more prevalent in the postwar period, stressing the normalization of a culture of police violence. He argues that “the depoliticization of the police, represented in professionalization and in civil service, may not be the panacea it is often thought to be” (1970, pp. xiii).

While Cold War era is associated with an economic growth and prosperity, it also came with a rise in organized crime rates and mafia violence. Big cities in America witnessed gang activities and a rise of drug, blackmail and racketeering. The expansion of mafia and organized crime impacted policing at the time in a way that it intensified the iron fist rule with which the police controlled urban areas, and at the same time reinforced the role of government agencies. As such, the power of the FBI and its role in law enforcement and combating crime also expanded (See Archbold 2012). With crime perceived through the lens of threats to national security, policing became more extensive and centralized.

This expanded power that the police and the FBI exercised in American towns allowed for surveillance to become a tool for control and anyone who was deemed subversive was targeted. Thomas Heise points out that hardboiled crime fiction was born amid a “profound shift in the study and prosecution of urban crime” (2005, p. 487). The “unprecedented federal and state intervention into the roots of criminality” which began in the 1920s and 1930s in the US, was also associated by the trend of the “scientific examination” of crime, which in turn “brought the spatiality and sociality of working-class life in the city under intensive scrutiny” (Heise 2005, p. 487).

This became even more pronounced in the postwar period with concerns of increasing state intervention and austere policing which further intensified the air of paranoia associated with the McCarthy era.

Mirroring these ideological and sociopolitical anxieties, Thompson's fiction vividly depicted the violence that ravished American towns along with the urge to challenge and subvert the legal and social dominant structures. Thompson's work included themes of surveillance and control, and the concerns for security and the expanded role of the police are also part and parcel of his stories. With all this playing out, the fascination with the serial killer has grown and this figure became a staple in postwar American crime fiction, particularly in Thompson's writing. In this regard, Fredrick Whiting argues that in postwar crime fiction, with the rise in sex crimes and the popularity of psychoanalysis, "a new species of monster, the sexual psychopath" emerges in the scene (2005, pp.156-7). By examining Spillane and Thompson's texts, Whiting outlines what he calls the "new monster" and suggests that writers like Thompson and Spillane show "the internal contradictions of the popular psychoanalytic reformulation of human boundaries in U.S. detective fiction during this period" and behind the interest in male pathology lies an anxiety over female sexuality (2005, p.151). In Thompson's fiction, the "new monster" is represented by "the twisted intelligence of the psychotic killer or the coldblooded amorality of the professional gunman" – the serial killer (Payne, 1996, p.68).

The serial killer is a fascinating figure that gained the attention of writers and filmmakers as well as the police, psychologists and scholars in a variety of disciplines. The serial killer narrative sets itself apart from other crime or mystery narratives. By portraying a "social landscape of pervasive and endemic crime, violence and evil in a postmodern context of apathy, indifference and institutional incompetence", the serial killer subgenre relies on a formula that centers on investigating a series of murders committed by the serial killer wherein the detective relies on evidence and clues to read the crime scene and the victims to reveal the identity of the killer (Santaulària, 2007, p.56). The serial killer narrative evokes horror and intrigue as it demonstrates the dark and brutal side of criminal behavior. It is worthy to mention that the term "serial killer" is relatively new as it has been in use since the 1960s; it refers to "unlawful killing of two or more victims by the same offender(s), in separate events," (Bentham, 2016, p. 204). Gaining popularity in the 1980s, the serial killer epitomizes the American fascination with violence, and the presence of this figure became "potent and ubiquitous" (Bentham, 2016, p. 203). Bentham suggests that the case and/or narrative of the serial killer:

lays bare the interplay between fact and fiction, myth-making and media, which secures the legacies of celebrated criminals and feeds the public appetite for thrilling stories of transgression (2016, p.205)

The allure of and fascination with the serial killer considering all the devastation and carnage associated with serial murder is thus part of a cultural project of violence. Criminals such as Ted Bundy, Jeffery Dahmer, Ed Gein, to name only a few are figures who shaped a public image of the serial killer with notoriety— “murder by numbers (as serial murder has been called) is the form of violence proper to statistical persons” (Seltzer, 1995, p.124). Indeed, there is a mythology that surrounds the serial killer, a mystique built on an expression of brutality and violence so extreme that it leaves an impact on society and collective consciousness. In the same vein, Mark Selzer in *Serial Killers: Death and Life in America's Wound Culture*, analyzes the public fascination with serial killers in what he calls “wound culture.” According to Selzer, this fascination with trauma, violence and crime is rooted in the divide and the breakdown between the private and the public in a culture where individuals are “torn” (1998, p. 1).

The study of the serial killer is an investigation of the dynamics of violence, but it also brings other elements into play, for example detection, the psychology and sociology of crime, gender, race and other factors that are often explored in serial killer narratives. The question of whether real serial killers are similar to/different from fictional ones is also an interesting one. It interrogates the issue of representation and the contestation of the serial killer as a construction and the ramifications of using this discursive classification in literary, legal and medical discourses. The discourses that attempt to explain the serial killer – the compulsion to repeat murder and the motives and desires that stand behind it – offer an intricate net of frameworks that assign meaning to a narrative that is otherwise hard to explain. As Simpson argues, the serial killer “achieves legendary status, largely through clever textual strategies that relocate the monstrous face behind the human one” (2000, p.3). There is a precariousness to the cultural positioning of the serial killer as he often “occupies the position of the Other within the structural opposition that generates the fantastic” (Hantke, 1998, p.181). This emphasis on ‘otherness’ has been the subject of many investigations into the serial killer (for example, Jenkins 1994; Picart and Greek 2003). The mythological, even fantastical element that surrounds the image of the serial killer allows him to occupy “the spaces outside the limiting frame of the 'human' and 'real,' outside the control of the 'word' and the 'look'” (Hantke, 1998, p.179). By so doing, the serial killer becomes an embodiment of subversion and transgression.

Repetition is also essential to the understanding of the serial killer. As the name itself suggests, seriality by definition relies on multiplicity and repetition of the criminal action. Therefore, chronology (time) is the link that connects the action and determines the identity of the criminal. In other words, the actions of the serial killer belong to the past, the present as well as the future (Hantke, 1998, p.179). There is a determinism that surrounds the serial killer; the serial killer committed crime in the past, but

it is expected that he will commit more crimes in the future. This adds to the stress on serial murder as a cultural project that impacts society on many levels. As Steven Egger argues:

The United States has long made legends out of outlaws. American history is full of the folklore of killers, many of the so-called heroes of yesteryear, including the lawmen and gunslingers of the old West, would fit the modern definition of serial killer [...] One of the key elements of the personality of the serial killer appears to be that he kills for an intrinsic motive, simply, he enjoys killing [...] All forms of the media have contributed to this portrayal of serial killers as clever, daring, sexy, and elusive (Egger, 2002, p.103)

The serial killer is capable of demonstrating extreme levels and demonstrations of violence, but he also relies on “banal and self-effacing profile.” This violence is the result of “both visceral and at times intellectual – drive to kill, an uncontrollable pleasure that like any uncontrollable pleasure, thrives on repetition” (Conrath 1994, pp.144-5). Serial killers “do not look like killers, nor does their appearance reflect an ultimate evil. Unfortunately, serial killers do not stand out [...] as anything other than the average person” (Egger, 2002, p. 47). The invisibility of the serial killer is part of the criminal persona and the mask that hides his identity. The serial killer can hide among us, which invokes more terror and adds to the mythology that surrounds him.

This masking behind an ordinary persona is especially evident in Thompson’s crime narratives as the serial killer, who not only ironically represents the law but also enjoys breaking legal, social and cultural limits and boundaries of society. Thompson’s serial killer does not fit the stereotypical image of the evil monster; Corey is a man in a small town who has an active role in the community, but behind this mask he is a ruthless murderer. *Pop. 1280* embodies many features of the serial killer narrative and makes the case for the connections between policing, medical discourses and the turbulent sociocultural anxieties of the Cold War as the next section will explain.

4. The policeman serial killer in *Pop. 1280*

Pop. 1280 is a prime example of Thompson’s depiction of the interplay between violence, policing and insanity in a small town in the 1960s. The book features Nick Corey, an unassuming sheriff in a town called Pottsville that has only 1280 inhabitants, and who turns out to be a ruthless serial killer. Corey uses the persona of a harmless and slow-witted policeman but masks behind it a dangerous and violent killer. Thompson’s creation of Corey introduces the subgenre of the serial killer. Indeed, the book is a masterpiece by Thompson, which reveals his dark vision and investigates the question of evil by using sarcasm, irony and the unique persona of Corey to showcase the malaise and corruption of the Cold War in small-town America.

The novel, at first glance, appears to be as another crime fiction book exploring a mystery, a story of crime and detection. However, with a close reading of the novel, it is evident that Thompson both transcends and transgresses the crime conventions of the hardboiled genre. In a story that is full of violence and murder, Thompson twists the formula of a detective solving a mystery by featuring a policeman who himself is the aggressor. Moreover, Thompson displays the meaninglessness of violence and the ease with which Corey is willing to commit crimes. The narrative encapsulates the author's ability to achieve an unflinching portrayal of a serial killer, and presents a moral dilemma that might force the reader to face an uncomfortable reality about human nature, justice, crime, evil and morality. Through taut prose and the deliberate use of dry comedy and sarcasm, Thompson creates a text that is both challenging and intriguing.

Pottsville, a fictional town in the South is a microcosm of America in the 1960s. It serves as an example of the “emptiness” and decay of the milieu at that time. Nick describes this emptiness as the “absence of things” (1990, p. 197) – it is both a physical and spiritual emptiness that best describes the town: “Not homes, not places for people to live in, not nothin'. Just pine-board walls locking in the emptiness. No pictures, no books—nothing to look at or think about. Just the emptiness that was soakin' in on me here” (1990, p.197). Through exposing hypocrisy and corruption in the town with a failing system and crooked people, Thompson outlines the perverse moral and social parameters of life under McCarthyism. As a political book more than Thompson's other works, *Pop. 1280* offers a critique of power dynamics in relation to violence and the law. The novel navigates the complex links between morality, crime, evil and insanity in a narrative that invites questions and provokes reactions. Corey is a representation of the paradoxes that define life in Pottsville. Describing the world of Thompson and his characters, Payne opines “Hereditary and social circumstances usually play a large role, but the more insightful of these characters [...] find ways to vent their disgust with what they see as the hypocrisy and the cynicism that infect the American world around them and in which they find themselves trapped” (1994, p.51).

Thompson's novel, therefore, depicts the state of malaise of life as reflected in the inaction of his protagonist sheriff. Corey boasts about his passive role as a policeman for he “didn't arrest no one unless I just couldn't get out of it and they didn't amount to nothin” (1990, p. 3). This feigned laziness is his way to use the criminal justice system to his advantage exploiting his position and power to commit crimes while facing no consequences. This passivity and inaction stand in contrast to his position as a serial killer who is revealed to plan and commit crimes repeatedly. Not only is Corey deliberately cynical about policing but he himself breaks the law and does not hesitate to revert to violence.

Throughout the novel, Thompson showcases the failure of the criminal justice system and law enforcement. Both this novel and *The Killer Inside Me* are a critique of policing in Cold War America. Via Pottsville and the dynamics presented between Corey and the townfolks, the novel exposes the legal and social structures that allow harm to occur to innocent people and for the guilty to walk away. By criticizing the institutions that are supposed to uphold justice and implement a fair system, Thompson points to the grim reality of the 1960s; corruption, immorality and fear are the key elements that defined the McCarthy era. As Woody Haut argues, Thompson outlines a world where anything is possible and where “sanity and insanity, right and wrong, good and evil, are indistinguishable; where external manifestations are used to explain the horrors of life ordinarily thought to be internal to those manifestations” (1995, p. 47). Thompson’s book, however, can be read to provide a deeper and broader perspective on human behavior and crime. So, although *Pop. 1280* can be contextualized in the Cold War America providing a lens to examine the anxieties of that time, it can also be considered within a more universal framework in how it investigates the human condition, particularly criminal behavior in relation to evil, justice and insanity. In other words, the novel can be regarded as a case study of crime and criminal behavior especially that of the serial killer. In scene after scene, Thompson paints horrifying images of a policeman who is not only violent but one who has no conscience.

Through Nick Corey’s characterization, the book dissects the psyche of the serial killer, how he acts and kills, and by so doing the narrative presents a chilling case study of the pathology of serial murder. For example, at the beginning of the novel when Corey talks with Lane Lacey, a sheriff of a county nearby, he complains about two pimps who constantly insult him. Lacey in turns mocks Corey emphasizing that if anyone dared to mock him, he would shoot them. Then Corey, who has been taking bribes from the pimps, shoots those men in cold blood and later implicates Lacey in the murders. Although his actions on the surface seem to be passive and unassuming, Corey is manipulative, cunning and eventually he is able to fulfil his hidden agenda. Nevertheless, there is an air of desperation that surrounds him in the way he processes and interacts with his environment. Corey appears trapped and plagued by a sense of impotence and a mundane reality of the town he lives in and polices. More significantly, his motives for the crimes he commits are not clearly stated. He seems motivated by a hunger for power while being mocked by those around him. His reaction to the townspeople mocking him is delayed and so violent that it can be read as a desperate attempt on Corey’s part to reclaim control through murdering those who belittled him. For example, Corey devises a plan to get rid of his wife, Myra, her brother, Lannie, and Rosie, a woman he has an affair with. With an elaborate web of betrayal and manipulations, Corey succeeds to get Rose to kill both Myra and

Lannie. He reveals a cold brutality when he laughs at Rose's horror when she realizes that not only did Corey manipulate her into committing murder but he can find pleasure in her suffering. He taunts her asking: "What kind of a believable explanation are you going to put together for them two dead bodies you got in your house and the blood all over the floor", and when she asks him to help her and "cover this up some way" he refuses and states, "After all, you're guilty of murder an' fornicatin' and hypocrisy, an'-" (1990, p. 205)

Corey, however, is not a typical criminal, a gangster or mobster. There is a complexity that surrounds him as he navigates his role as a policeman and a serial killer. The psychological profile that Thompson paints of the serial killer in this novel is one of duality and ambiguity. Corey justifies his crimes as acts of survival and his veneer as a charming sheriff hides a dangerous man who shows no guilt or remorse. Towards the end of the book, Corey starts to exhibit a detachment from reality that manifests itself in delusions. In his inner monologue, Corey believes that he is an agent who is carrying out divine justice in Pottsville. He seems to be less in touch with reality as he believes that he is Jesus Christ sent to save people, "I'm the savior himself, Christ on the Cross come right here to Potts County, because God knows I was needed here, an' I'm goin' around doing kindly deeds-so that people will know they got nothing to fear and if they're worried about hell they don't have to dig for it" (1990, p.179). This shift in his mental state at the end of the book is telling of a breakdown in his mental faculties, which provides Corey with a twisted rationale to justify his crimes as he believed that he was ridding the town of those he considered sinners.

Thompson uses insanity as a tool for the depiction of malaise and melancholy of Pottsville. There is a sense of nihilism that is evident in the way Corey carries himself and the way he interacts with the townsfolk. Corey tries to "play Jesus Christ and to exact social retribution are futile gestures in the face of his overriding sense of the vacuum at the center of things" (Payne, 1994, p. 56). Insanity is also used narratively as a critique to criminological discourses during the Cold War, which emphasized control and suppression of freedoms. Serial murder in particular is linked to a variety of psychological, social and criminal influences; Thompson portrays his protagonist, Corey to have a pathology that makes him one of the most chilling protagonists in crime fiction. It is also noteworthy to mention that Thompson's text plays on the distinction between sanity and insanity. At the start of the novel Corey is intelligent and aware of his environment with an ability to manipulate others. But then he deteriorates into a state where he seems to lose insight and suffers from delusions and a dissociation from reality. To achieve this image of his protagonist serial killer, Thompson uses moral ambiguity and dualisms to demonstrate the complexity of criminal behavior. *Pop.1280* subverts the traditional portrayal of insanity as a condition that renders a person completely irrational, incoherent and cognitively impaired.

Instead, the “alienated protagonists” in Thompson’s fiction, “exhibit varying degrees of insight into the complex causes of their psychosis and the extent to which it may be an expression of a deeper cultural neurosis” (Payne 1994, p.51).

As the narrator of his own story, we get a glimpse into Corey’s mind and see the different facets of his behavior. The paradox of his character does not simply lie in having two contrasting sides, but it is how he uses one persona to mask another and carefully switches from one to the other to gain impunity. The novel starts with setting the persona of a “worried” sheriff but at the same time establishes a grotesque sense of irony:

Well, sir, I should have been sitting pretty, just about as pretty as a man could sit. Here I was, the high sheriff of Potts County [...] I had it made [...] And yet I was worried. I had so many troubles that I was worried plumb sick. (1990, p. 3)

The beginning of the book is comic as Corey lists his anxieties about eating pork chops and sleeping eight hours at night: “I’d start worrying about those problems of mine, and the next thing you knew I was getting up from the table with food still left on my plate” (1990, p.3). There is a sense of detachment and disassociation that are later validated with the shift in his mental state. Corey plays with words using language as a weapon to carry out his manipulations. Part of his disguise is the language he employs to project the persona of a simple-minded man. Corey’s sarcasm and the dark comedy surrounding him create a framework that defines the violence in his story not just in relation to the murders he commits, but also as symptoms of the dysfunction and the “emptiness” that characterized life in Cold War America. Moreover, the novel brings forth the conflict between the public and the private. As a law enforcement officer, Corey’s role is public service. Yet his criminal behavior is played out in a small domestic sphere and his own wife falls victim to his violence. The book extends an invitation to explore the family dynamics (for example, Cory with Myra and Rose), but there are broader legal, medical and sociopolitical contexts that delve into the domain of criminal behavior, morality and evil.

Unpacking and explaining “evil” is part of a bigger project that investigates the motives and actions of the serial killer. Dorothy Clark’s analysis, which examines *The Killer Inside Me* but can be easily applied to *Pop. 1280*, focuses on how Thompson’s serial killer narrative “holds up an evil person as a mirror to the culture, and reflects back on us how woefully coherent, and uninformative, our modern narratives about evil really are” (2005, p.27) At the essence of this narrative of evil is the “profound cultural project – the colonization and conquest of those darker regions of the human soul in which evil dwells” (Clark, 2005, p.27). The presentation of Corey as a serial killer is thus attached to a psychological pathology, but it is also correlated to a set of sociocultural issues at stake in society. The

outlook of the medical discourses in this novel is thus inseparable from the violence that defines the text, hence provoking questions about evil and crime. Corey's murderous actions are presented through a clinical lens showcasing mental illness at the heart of the discourse on the serial killer; however, it simultaneously challenges the standards of what society deems "evil."

The novel also presents the lines between truth and lies, between what society deems acceptable and what is considered taboo as thin and blurred. Thompson depicts "clichés as both a key feature of commodified social existence and emblematic of the way late capitalist society presents itself as stagnant, timeless, and beyond challenge" (Anshen, 2007, p.402). *Pop. 1280* establishes a complacency by the townspeople to the crimes and evil they witness and there is indifference, perhaps even apathy in the small town. When Corey orchestrates his elaborate murder plans, not only does he involve others (for example, Rose), but he also exposes the ease with which people in Pottsville accept the violence. Thompson's book can be seen as a scathing criticism to the social and moral norms in a society that does not fight back and allows for evil to keep happening. The moral ambiguity that Thompson's text paints is key to read his characters especially the serial killer. The text evokes the uncomfortable question of how those who seem ordinary and active members of a community, let alone a policeman can be the face of evil in that context.

Thompson's *Pop.1280*, therefore, invites difficult questions and goes into murky waters particularly in the treatment of moral justice, evil, law and policing. In his characterization of Nick Corey, Thompson creates a dilemma for his readers. We see Nick ridiculed, mocked and belittled, which produces an image contrary to the one of a calculating serial killer. Empathy is not easily available to Corey who seeks self-preservation in an apathetic community. However, the violence and ruthlessness of Corey as a serial killer are set against his role as a sheriff in a corrupt system that does not respect the law and the police force. Eventually Thompson succeeds in creating a complex serial killer narrative that alternates between comedy, cynicism and horror and creates a challenge to be read not only against the sociocultural and political milieu of Cold War America, but also against the legal discourse on crime, justice and policing.

5. Conclusion

What Kenneth Payne describes as the "American emptiness," in Thompson's fiction is the key to read *Pop. 1280* narratively and technically (1994, p. 51). Thompson presents a protagonist with a pathology that is emblematic of the American serial killer narrative. At the heart of this narrative is the conflict between the bucolic life in Pottsville and the violence and cruelty that it masks. The novel provides a scathing critique of Cold War America and extends an invitation to examine the criminological and medical discourses that address crime, justice and morality.

The novel also offers a commentary on the nature of evil and the sociocultural critique of the Cold War milieu. The violence that the book relates is not only brutal and extreme, but the way it is masked behind law enforcement and the criminal justice system points to a failing system at every juncture. The conflation between policing, violence, serial killing and mental illness is illustrated through nuanced and layered connections in Thompson's story in a manner that dissects the criminological and medical treatment of crime at the time. Thus, Thompson's fiction subverts the contemporary discourses on crime that focused on draconian policing associated with McCarthyism in America in the 1950s and 1960s. By portraying a precarious society ridden with crime where the police and law enforcement are corrupt and criminal, Thompson brings to the forefront the anxieties that ravished America at the time.

As such, subversion becomes the key to read Thompson's fiction. His narratives push the boundaries of the genre of hardboiled fiction redefining the generic conventions that rely on closure, containment and the fulfilment of a version of a hardboiled justice that exists in the stories of the founders of the genre such as Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler. By creating his own parameters in a narrative that exists in "the moral no-man's land of society" (Payne 1996, p. 67), Thompson challenges the representations of the hardboiled hero and creates a recipe that shows the hardboiled formula in its extreme form. His world is defined by the violent tendencies of his protagonists and the interconnection between policing, insanity and crime. Not only does Thompson present the serial killer as the hardboiled protagonist, but he also reshapes this role by conflating policing with medical discourses. Destabilizing the conventions of a genre that relies on crime and detection, Thompson's serial killer is not the antagonist whom the police and the detective hunt and capture at the end of the story. Ultimately Thompson's leaves us with a feeling of going nowhere, a vicious cycle that cannot be escaped. Thompson presents this cycle narratively through a compelling story where violence is set against everyday life and where characters lead double lives. *Pop.1280* stresses the hardboiled formula of a "character poisoned or compromised by his surroundings" – the "the sense of the sinister world, or an inescapably problematic atmosphere" (Lee, 2003, p.44).

Conversly, medical discourses play a role in understanding the individual and societal structures associated with the prevalence of violence and serial murder in Thompson's fictional world. As Robert Polito suggests, Thompson's *Pop. 1280* "wriggles past private madness, or American rot, to universal horror" (1995, p.456). Via the complex profile of the serial killer, Thompson narrates a story in *Pop 1280* that uses intermingled criminal and medical discourses and permits a closer look into the intricacies and connections between them. But it is Corey who is the "author and producer of that horror" constructing "a particularly sinister

postmodern resonance” (Lee, 2003, p. 44). Thomposn’s novel, thus, remains a profound commentary on crime, evil and the hidden and dark side of human nature.

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7. References

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