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The Challenges of Green Human Resource Management and Their Impact on Employees' Green Beliefs, Attitudes and Behaviours: The Case of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry

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ABSTRACT

Green human resource management is increasingly recognised as essential for integrating environmental concerns into organisational strategies. Drawing on qualitative data from 30 professionals in Nigeria's oil and gas industry, this study explores how inconsistencies between employees' environmental values and GHRM practices influence employees' green beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. Using multiple perspectives in cognitive consistency theory (balance, congruity, dissonance and self-consistency), it examines how employees seek to restore coherence between personal values and organisational practices. Findings reveal that while green beliefs remain resilient, attitudes and behaviours diverge along two pathways: indifference and inaction, and constructive advocacy, each representing efforts to achieve cognitive consistency. The study advances theory by demonstrating differentiated responsiveness across cognitive domains and highlighting employee agency as a mechanism for resolving dissonance. Practically, it recommends integrating GHRM within HR functions, developing HR managers' competencies, aligning appraisals and rewards with environmental objectives and supporting employee-led advocacy to promote meaningful environmental commitment.

1 | Introduction

Sustainable business practices have gained increasing prominence amid intensifying global concern over environmental degradation (Obeidat et al. 2020; Lathabhavan 2022). Within this landscape, human resources (HR) are widely recognised as a key driver of sustainable business practices. This recognition has led to the emergence of green human resource management (GHRM), a strategic approach that integrates environmental considerations into core HRM functions (Owino and Kwasira 2016; Teixeira et al. 2016; Amjad et al. 2021). GHRM plays a central role in aligning organisational environmental objectives with broader competitive strategies (Jabbour 2011) by 'greening' HRM processes such as job design, recruitment, training, performance management and rewards (Renwick et al. 2013). Through these mechanisms, GHRM influences employee outcomes (Tang et al. 2018), shapes organisational culture (Suharti and Sugiarto 2020) and positions environmental sustainability as integral to both organisational and employee development (Opatha 2013; Rani and Mishra 2014).

Despite this growing interest, significant gaps remain in GHRM research when considering industries with high environmental impact. While the oil and gas industry is widely associated with serious environmental harm, most GHRM research has focused on manufacturing (e.g., Wang et al. 2023; Aftab et al. 2023) and, to a lesser extent, hospitality (e.g., Úbeda-García et al. 2021; Mo et al. 2025), with relatively few examining oil and gas (e.g.,

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Fayyazi et al. 2015; Obeidat et al. 2020; Tamunomiebi and Mezeh 2022).

This gap is particularly important in the Nigerian context, where the oil and gas industry continues to face persistent environmental performance challenges. Despite the existence of regulatory frameworks, such as the National Policy on Environment (1999), firms have struggled to prevent recurrent oil spills, reduce gas flaring emissions, control soil and water contamination, and implement effective environmental remediation across the Niger Delta region (UNEP 2011; Adewuyi et al. 2020; Gbadamosi and Aldstadt 2025). Moreover, enforcement remains weak and inconsistent (Eweje 2006; Agbonifo 2016; Oyebode 2018), encouraging non-compliance.

Existing studies in the Nigerian oil and gas industry have examined the relationship between GHRM practices and corporate or environmental sustainability outcomes (Tamunomiebi and Mezeh 2022; Mezeh and Adim 2023; Aderibigbe et al. 2023; Ametepe et al. 2025). Recent evidence further suggests that although organisations formally adopt GHRM practices to signal environmental commitment, their implementation may remain inconsistent with operational realities, resulting in gaps between formal sustainability commitments and actual practices (Aina et al. 2026). Nevertheless, it remains unclear how employees perceive and interpret these inconsistencies in practice. Understanding employees' perceptions is important because employees are not passive recipients of organisational practices but active agents whose interpretations and responses determine whether environmental initiatives translate into meaningful behavioural change.

Accordingly, understanding these micro-level dynamics is needed to explore how employees perceive these discrepancies and how such experiences influence their green beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. Recent research confirms that employees' perceptions of GHRM strongly influence their green behaviours (Zhang and Sun 2021) and their willingness to advocate for sustainability (Cheng et al. 2022). Against this backdrop, this study investigates the Nigerian oil and gas industry to pursue two objectives: (1) to explore the challenges faced by organisations in implementing GHRM and (2) to examine the impact of such challenges on employees' green beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. Drawing on semi-structured interviews with 30 professionals across 10 multinational and indigenous firms, this study employs cognitive consistency theory (Heider 1946; Osgood and Tannenbaum 1955; Festinger 1957; Aronson 1968, 1969) to explain how challenges in GHRM implementation may create conflict between employees' green values and those of their organisation's environmental goals.

This study makes two main contributions to the GHRM literature. First, it offers a methodological contribution by providing one of the first qualitative examinations of GHRM implementation challenges and their effects on employees' perceptions and actions in the Nigerian oil and gas industry. Existing studies in this context have largely relied on cross-sectional survey designs and statistical modelling to examine relationships between GHRM practices and organisational outcomes, such as corporate sustainability or organisational agility (Tamunomiebi and Mezeh 2022; Mezeh and Adim 2023; Ametepe et al. 2025). While these studies provide valuable quantitative insights, they offer limited understanding of how employees experience and interpret GHRM implementation challenges in practice. Qualitative inquiry enables a more in-depth exploration of participants' experiences of organisational dynamics (Creswell 2013). This study, therefore, responds to one of the calls by Pham et al. (2020) for more nuanced qualitative inquiry and provides fresh empirical evidence.

Second, the study advances the literature of GHRM by integrating multiple perspectives to explain how employees make sense of GHRM inconsistency through cognitive consistency theory, whereas prior research typically applies a single perspective (e.g., Cheng et al. 2022; Zhang and Sun 2021). This study shows the value of a multi-perspective approach and uncovers the differentiated responsiveness of beliefs, attitudes and behaviours towards GHRM inconsistencies. This offers a more refined conceptualisation of cognitive consistency in organisational settings.

2 | Theoretical Background

2.1 | Conceptualising GHRM and Its Implementation Challenges

GHRM is a concept that deploys HRM core functions towards a broader corporate agenda of protecting and preserving natural resources (Prasad 2013). Renwick et al. (2008) offered one of the earliest systematic conceptualisations, framing it as the integration of environmental management systems into HRM policies and practices. They discussed how HR functions such as recruitment, training, performance management and employee involvement can support environmental goals. Jabbour et al. (2010) further described GHRM as the 'greening' of HRM dimensions such as job design, recruitment, training, appraisal and rewards, while Renwick et al. (2013) presented a more refined conceptual model. Empirical work by Tang et al. (2018) developed and validated a multidimensional scale of GHRM practices, establishing core practices such as training, performance management, reward systems and employee involvement, thereby providing a robust measurement framework for subsequent examination of employee and organisational outcomes.

While GHRM is viewed as a strategic tool for enhancing efficiency, reducing costs, strengthening corporate image and influencing employee culture (Suharti and Sugiarto 2020), its implementation has encountered persistent barriers. Organisations often fail to deploy the full range of practices, hindered by line-management bottlenecks and weak performance-management linkages (Renwick et al. 2013) as well as employee cynicism and environmental knowledge gaps (Jackson et al. 2011). Other reviews highlight barriers, such as contextual uncertainties and cultural influences (Ren et al. 2018), resource limitations and underdeveloped GHRM processes (Amrutha and Geetha 2020), weak leadership commitment and lack of top management support, as well as limited monitoring and evaluation linkages to HR systems (Fawehinmi et al. 2022).

Further, incentive systems often remain tied to economic outcomes, which reduces employee motivation to engage in green

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practices and exposes a disconnect between commitments and GHRM practices (Bombiak 2020). High costs of training, technology and incentives also constrain adoption (Fawehinmi et al. 2022). Even in mature markets, organisations hesitate to expand green training and rewards due to difficulties in measuring outcomes and justifying financial returns, which limits their perceived value (Jackson et al. 2011). Organisational priorities and procedural implementation of environmental initiatives can make such programmes appear burdensome, prompting employee resistance or disengagement (Filimonau et al. 2023). Knowledge gaps and low employee involvement further weaken implementation. Moreover, Fawehinmi et al. (2022) stress that symbolic or imposed initiatives fuel scepticism and disengagement. Similarly, Fayyazi et al. (2015) found significant deficits in environmental knowledge and policy understanding among HR managers and staff in Iran's oil industry.

In Nigeria, inconsistent regulatory enforcement and competing operational priorities risk rendering GHRM symbolic rather than strategic unless anchored by strong executive sponsorship and coherent HR systems (Richard-Osu 2023). Emerging literature in the Nigerian oil and gas industry establishes useful insights into the relationships between GHRM practices and organisational outcomes (e.g., Tamunomiebi and Mezeh 2022; Aderibigbe et al. 2023; Mezeh and Adim 2023; Ametepe et al. 2025). However, they do not engage with the practical challenges of implementing GHRM, and the question of how employees, who are the operational drivers of environmental activities within organisations, respond to such challenges remains unexplored.

2.2 | Cognitive Consistency Theory and Employees' Responses to GHRM Challenges

This study draws on cognitive consistency theory to explain how employees perceive and respond to inconsistencies in GHRM implementation. The theory posits that individuals are motivated to maintain harmony among their beliefs, attitudes and behaviours, as inconsistencies create psychological discomfort (Heider 1946; Osgood and Tannenbaum 1955; Festinger 1957; Harmon-Jones and Harmon-Jones 2007). The theory provides a lens for understanding how individuals resolve internal or interpersonal conflicts by adjusting their cognitions. It encompasses four key perspectives: balance, congruity, dissonance and self-consistency.

Heider (1946) proposed the balance perspective, suggesting that individuals are motivated to maintain cognitive harmony within a triadic relationship structure, typically involving a person (P), another person (O) and an object or concept (X). It suggests that imbalance in triadic relationships evokes psychological strain and motivates adjustment (Gawronski and Strack 2012; Brannon and Gawronski 2018). Building on the balance perspective, Osgood and Tannenbaum (1955) introduced the congruity concept, focusing on attitudinal harmony. The congruity perspective advances that individuals are motivated to maintain affective consistency between their attitudes toward a source (e.g., employer or manager) and their evaluations of related objects, stimuli or ideas associated with that source, such as GHRM practices.

The dissonance perspective, developed by Festinger (1957), describes the discomfort individuals feel when holding contradictory cognitions such as ideas, values, culture, attitudes and behaviours. This discomfort motivates them to reduce inconsistency and restore inner balance by moderating their conflicting cognitions (Harmon-Jones and Harmon-Jones 2007). By extension, Aronson (1968, 1969) argues that this discomfort is stronger when it involves one's self-concept (self-consistency perspective). As such, individuals strive to achieve harmony when inconsistent attitudes or behaviours challenge their self-identity.

In organisational settings, cognitive consistency theory offers insight into how employees respond to misalignments between personal values and organisational strategies (Cheng et al. 2022). Perceived congruence between organisational practices and employees' values shapes their attitudes and behaviours toward organisational goals (Thøgersen 2004). When GHRM practices align with employees' values, they are more likely to engage in pro-environmental behaviours (Norton et al. 2015). Conversely, when initiatives are symbolic, weakly implemented or in conflict with core values, employees experience cognitive strain that often manifests as disengagement, scepticism or withdrawal (Paillé and Mejía-Morelos 2014; Paillé and Raineri 2015; Zhang and Sun 2021; Filimonau et al. 2023; Tao and Chao 2024).

When environmental sustainability forms part of the self-concept, organisational discrepancies can create acute dissonance that destabilises psychological equilibrium (Aronson 1968, 1969; Thøgersen 2004). This is not limited to behavioural inconsistencies, as rhetorical overpromising or managerial neglect of sustainability signals may also provoke perceptions of insincerity, which employees resolve through rationalisation or disengagement (Paillé and Raineri 2015; Filimonau et al. 2023; Tao and Chao 2024). More recently, research has shown that when GHRM practices are perceived as performative, employees experience greenwashing disillusionment, provoking organisational cynicism and weakening green behaviours (Filimonau et al. 2023; Tao and Chao 2024). From a self-consistency perspective, such reactions can be understood as protective strategies, whereby employees preserve a stable sense of moral or environmental identity in the face of organisational contradictions (Aronson 1968, 1969).

Within the GHRM domain, cognitive consistency theory has been applied in different ways, underscoring its flexibility as an analytical lens. Cheng et al. (2022) applied the dissonance perspective to demonstrate that organisation-based self-esteem mediates the relationship between GHRM and employee green advocacy, showing how employees act in ways that preserve consistent self-cognitions. Zhang and Sun (2021), drawing on the self-standards model of dissonance (Thibodeau and Aronson 1992), examined how the interaction of green compensation and green training weakened pro-environmental behaviours by creating conflicting self-standards and reducing employee accountability.

In contexts such as the Nigerian oil and gas industry, prior studies have begun to shed light on the evolving nature of GHRM. Specifically, they provide valuable evidence by linking selected

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GHRM practices to corporate and environmental sustainability as well as organisational agility (Tamunomiebi and Mezeh 2022; Aderibigbe et al. 2023; Mezeh and Adim 2023; Ametepe et al. 2025). However, there remains a lack of empirical understanding of how employees perceive and respond to fragmented practices. Cognitive consistency theory provides a useful lens to investigate the psychological mechanisms that explain employees' sense-making when organisational actions diverge from espoused values.

Table 1 provides an overview of prior GHRM literature across implementation challenges and employee responses. It highlights limited theoretical development and a predominance of studies measuring relationships among selected GHRM practices. It further reveals a critical gap in understanding how employees interpret and respond to GHRM implementation challenges, particularly within the Nigerian oil and gas industry.

3 | Methods

3.1 | Recruitment and Data Collection

This study adopts an interpretivist approach, which is considered appropriate, as the study seeks to understand participants' subjective experiences of GHRM implementation and its challenges rather than measuring objective outcomes (Creswell 2013). To achieve this, semi-structured interviews were conducted to develop an in-depth exploration of employees' green beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. Purposive sampling, a non-probability technique based on researcher judgement (Rai and Thapa 2015), was used to recruit 30 participants comprising HR managers, Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) professionals, and field engineers, each with at least 3-year experience and direct involvement in organisational environmental practices. Eligibility was assessed through role-based criteria and minimum industry experience, as specified in the participant information sheet. Participant recruitment occurred between August 2023 and April 2024 in three stages.

The pilot stage comprised eight interviews drawn from an initial pool of 27 professionals identified through networking and snowballing. Insights from this phase informed refinements to the study design, sequencing, probing and supported early rapport-building. For instance, HSE professionals were not initially considered in the research design; however, they were incorporated following an approved ethics amendment after pilot participants highlighted their central role in operational and environmental compliance. In addition, several participants were not familiar with the term 'Green HRM'; therefore, the interview questions clarified the term as the integration of environmental management principles into HR practices. Subsequently, additional probes were introduced to explore how environmental policies are communicated and translated into employee practices. Notably, the eight pilot interviews met the study's inclusion criteria; therefore, they were retained in the final dataset. The second stage of recruitment used LinkedIn to reach professionals across oil and gas organisations. A total of 152 connection requests were sent out, yielding 17 interviews. To confirm participants' professional roles, their LinkedIn profiles were reviewed.

The Nigerian oil and gas industry comprises three subsectors: upstream (exploration and extraction), midstream (transportation and storage) and downstream (refining, distribution and marketing). The sample is weighted toward multinational companies (MNCs) in exploration and production (E&P), reflecting their dominance in the upstream sector where most environmental risks occur. To enhance representation from indigenous companies in E&P, a third recruitment stage was undertaken, targeting engineers through a screening form hosted on the Jisc Online Surveys platform, where respondents confirmed their engineering role and specified their field before proceeding. Participants were also asked to describe their responsibilities during the interview to confirm their engagement with organisational environmental practices. A total of 26 engineers from indigenous Nigerian oil and gas companies completed the online recruitment form; however, five interviews were conducted, bringing the total sample to 30 participants. Overall, Table 2 shows that 17 participants were from multinational oil and gas companies (MNCs), 10 from indigenous Nigerian companies (INCs), and three from Nigeria's sole private limited liability company (PLLC).

While snowball sampling and LinkedIn recruitment may introduce selection bias by favouring more visible or professionally connected individuals, the multi-stage strategy and role-based inclusion criteria ensured diversity in roles, organisational types and operational responsibilities. HR professionals were included for their role in designing and implementing GHRM practices and contributing strategic perspectives (e.g., HR corporate strategy and planning P12). HSE professionals, identified during pilot interviews as central to operational environmental compliance, were subsequently incorporated. Field engineers were included due to their direct involvement in production processes and environmental procedures. Senior executives were excluded to minimise reputational filtering, as they may present organisational environmental practices in ways that protect organisational image.

3.2 | Interview Process

Semi-structured interviews were employed to facilitate flexible and interactive discussions (Qu and Dumay 2011). The interview guide was aligned with the study's objectives and informed by cognitive consistency theory, incorporating balance, congruity and dissonance perspectives. Questions were open-ended and thematically organised to capture participants' experiences of GHRM implementation, environmental practices and perceived inconsistencies between environmental commitments and operational realities. Interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams, each session lasting 30–40 min. All interviews were conducted in English and were transcribed verbatim for analysis.

3.3 | Data Analysis

An inductive approach guided the analysis, with codes and concepts generated directly from participants' accounts (Jebreen 2012). Data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2021a) six-phase thematic analysis framework. NVivo software supported systematic coding, data

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TABLE 1 | Summary of existing literature on GHRM.

Authors/year	Gaps identified	Purpose	Country/ context	Methodology/ sample	Theoretical framework	Main constructs	Key findings
Fayyazi et al. (2015)	GHRM still in early stages, literature largely theoretical	Identify barriers to GHRM implementation	Iran, oil industry	Mixed methods; 12 experts; 31 oil experts and HR managers	N/A	GHRM barriers; cultural, technological, managerial, staff factors	Lack of comprehensive plan and ambiguous green values ranked highest; staff resistance lowest
Ren et al. (2018)	Theoretical foundations, measurement, and contextual influences remain under-specified; need multi-level and employee-centric research	Evaluate and advance the GHRM field through a narrative literature review	Global GHRM literature (multiple regions)	Systematic/ narrative literature review'42 articles (13 conceptual; 29 empirical)	Strategic HRM perspective	Antecedents; consequences; contingencies; employee perceptions; context	GHRM foundations, measurement, and theoretical bases under-specified
Bombiak (2020)	Limited research on barriers to practical GHRM implementation	Identify barriers to GHRM implementation	Poland	CATI survey; random sample of 300 enterprises	N/A	GHRM implementation level; barriers to GHRM practices	Limited finance, lack of incentives, low managerial competencies, low effectiveness of tools, economic-oriented culture
Amrutha and Geetha (2020)	Lack of studies linking GHRM to social sustainability	Systematic review GHRM literature and identify research gaps and outcomes	Global GHRM literature (1995–2019)	(PRISMA); NVivo content coding; cluster analysis; grounded theory; 174 articles	AMO theory; social identity theory	GHRM practices; employee behaviour; sustainability; social sustainability	Three clusters identified; social sustainability least explored; model linking GHRM and social sustainability proposed
Fawehinmi et al. (2022)	Limited research on challenges and practical implementation of GHRM encourage employee green behaviour	Highlight challenges in implementing GHRM to encourage employee green behaviour	Broad organisational context	Narrative review (book chapter); no sample	AMO theory referenced	GRS; GTD; GPMA; GRC; GI; employee green behaviour	Implementation constrained by lack of leadership support, weak systems, high cost, poor appraisal, low involvement

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TABLE 1 | (Continued)

Authors/year	Gaps identified	Purpose	Country/ context	Methodology/ sample	Theoretical framework	Main constructs	Key findings
Paillé and Mejía-Morelos (2014)	Limited workplace evidence on PEBs; limited research on PC breach in environmental context	Examine antecedents of workplace PEBs and role of PC breach	Mexico	Cross-sectional field study; survey; final sample = 449 employees	Social exchange theory	POS; job satisfaction; organisational commitment; PC breach; PEBs	POS indirectly influences PEBs via commitment; PC breach moderates POS–job satisfaction relationship
Paillé and Raineri (2015)	Limited empirical testing of indirect POS effects and interaction with PC breach in eco-behaviour	Test relationships among environmental policies, POS, PC breach, and eco-initiatives	Canada; employees recruited via alumni of a Canadian university	Survey; convenience sample; $N = 651$	Social exchange theory	PCEPs; POS; PC breach; eco-initiatives	POS mediates PCEPs–eco-initiatives; PC breach weakens eco-initiatives under low POS
Zhang and Sun (2021)	Lack of Chinese evidence on interactive GHRM effects and underlying mechanism	Examine interaction of green compensation and green training on employee pro-environmental behaviour (EPEB)	China	Online survey; mediated moderation analysis; 847	Self-determination theory; cognitive dissonance theory of self-standards	Green compensation; green training; EGSA; EPEB	GC and GT were each positive separately, but their high–high combination negatively affected EPEB; EGSA partially mediated
Cheng et al. (2022)	Limited research on employee green advocacy and its psychological mechanism	Explore what drives employee green advocacy	China	Two-wave matched survey, 135 employee–CHO pairs	Cognitive consistency theory	GHRM; organisation-based self-esteem (OBSE); green advocacy; perceived organisational support (POS)	HRM positively influenced green advocacy via OBSE; POS strengthened the GHRM–OBSE relationship

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TABLE 1 | (Continued)

Authors/year	Gaps identified	Purpose	Country/ context	Methodology/ sample	Theoretical framework	Main constructs	Key findings
Tao and Chao (2024)	Limited research had examined the greenwashing–employee behaviour link, especially cross-culturally	Examine how corporate greenwashing affects employees' pro-environmental behaviour	China, United Kingdom, Republic of Korea, Japan	Quantitative; three-wave survey; SEM and fsQCA; 1830 employees	N/A	Corporate greenwashing; corporate hypocrisy perception; negative pro-environmental attitude; organisational cynicism; pro-environmental behaviour	Greenwashing suppressed employee pro-environmental behaviour; effects were mediated by hypocrisy perception, negative attitudes, and cynicism
Tamunomiebi and Mezeh (2022)	Limited studies in emerging economies such as Nigeria; GHRM antecedents inconclusive	Investigate GHRM and corporate sustainability among oil and gas companies	Port Harcourt, Nigeria; oil and gas	Quantitative; cross-sectional survey; 180 HR managers	Theory of green economy	Green recruitment, green training, green rewards, corporate sustainability	GHRM significantly predicted corporate sustainability
Aderibigbe et al. (2023)	Limited GHRM studies in NOS industry	Appraise GHRM practices and their effect on ES	Niger Delta, NOS firms	Survey design; sample = 400 employees (Taro Yamane)	N/A	Green recruitment, training, pay/ reward, discipline, performance evaluation, ES	GHRM significantly influenced ES; green recruitment had the strongest effect
Mezeh and Adim (2023)	Contextual gap in Nigerian MNC oil and gas firms	Examine moderating role of green work climate perceptions on GHRM–organisational agility relationship	Nigeria; MNC oil and gas companies	Cross-sectional survey; 50 managers (census of 5 firms)	Dynamic capabilities theory	GHRM, green work climate perceptions, organisational agility	Green work climate perceptions significantly moderated the GHRM–organisational agility relationship
Ametepe et al. (2025)	Limited understanding of GHRM and corporate sustainability in emerging economies, especially NOS industry	Examine GHRM, leader support, and corporate sustainability	Nigeria (Lagos and Port Harcourt); oil and gas firms	Cross-sectional design; multistage sampling; 350 respondents	Natural resource-based view (NRBV); stakeholder theory	GHRM practices; leader support; corporate sustainability	GHRM positively influenced corporate sustainability; leader support mediated the relationship

Abbreviations: EGB, employee green behaviour; EGSA, green self-accountability; EMS, environmental management system; EPEB, employee pro-environmental behaviour; ES, environmental sustainability; GC, green compensation; GI, green involvement; GPMA, green performance management and appraisal; GRC, green rewards and compensation; GRS, green recruitment and selection; GT, green training; GTD, green training and development; MNC, multinational corporation; NOS, Nigerian oil and gas; PC, psychological contract; PCEPs, perceived corporate environmental policies; PEBs, pro-environmental behaviours; POS, perceived organisational support.

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TABLE 2 | Participants' information.

Participants' ID	Organisations' ID	Type of organisation	Job role	Industry experience (year)	Location of organisation
P1	C1	MNC	Operations/field engineer	6	Port Harcourt
P2	C2	PLLC	Facility engineer	7	Bonny
P3	C1	MNC	HR and project advisor	18	Abuja
P4	C3	INC	Marine engineer	8	Port Harcourt
P5	C4	INC	Project engineer	22	Abuja
P6	C5	INC	HR administrator	12	Warri
P7	C6	MNC	Project manager	6	Lagos
P8	C7	MNC	Production supervisor	21	Rivers
P9	C7	MNC	Onshore exploration manager	18	Abuja
P10	C7	MNC	HSE coordinator	7	Obikrom
P11	C7	MNC	Field HSE rep	4	Port Harcourt
P12	C2	PLLC	Corporate strategy and planning (HR)	5	Abuja
P13	C7	MNC	Senior geologist	22	Abuja
P14	C1	MNC	Pipeline engineer	9	Port Harcourt
P15	C8	INC	HSE manager	3	Port Harcourt
P16	C2	MNC	Environmental supervisor	6	Bonny
P17	C1	MNC	HR professional	14	Lagos
P18	C7	MNC	HSE engineer	3	Port Harcourt
P19	C2	PLLC	HSE advisor	8	Bonny
P20	C9	INC	Pipeline and facility engineer	8	Port Harcourt
P21	C7	MNC	HSE drilling supervisor	10	Port Harcourt
P22	C10	MNC	Reservoir engineer	16	Bayelsa
P23	C7	MNC	Training manager, HR	20	Abuja
P24	C10	MNC	Human and organisational performance process advisor	15	Delta
P25	C10	MNC	Manager, HR administration	14	Lagos
P26	C11	INC	Procurement engineer	8	Rivers
P27	C12	INC	Electrical manager	8	Lagos
P28	C13	INC	Petroleum engineer	8	Rivers
P29	C14	INC	Maintenance engineer	4	Rivers
P30	C15	INC	Piping engineer	3	Rivers

organisation and theme development, enhancing transparency and rigour. Phases 1 and 2 involved data immersion and systematic coding, generating multiple codes reflecting participants' interpretations of GHRM implementation challenges. Phases 3 and 4 grouped these codes into clusters, developing inductive sub-themes. Phases 5 and 6 focused on reviewing, refining and naming themes, leading to the structured reporting of findings.

3.4 | Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the relevant institutional review board. Informed consent was secured from all participants, who were assured of confidentiality, anonymity and the right to withdraw at any point without consequence. All data were securely stored, and identifying details were removed during transcription.

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4 | Findings

Drawing on cognitive consistency theory (Heider 1946; Osgood and Tannenbaum 1955; Festinger 1957; Aronson 1968), this section reports two key areas of analysis: (1) the challenges of GHRM implementation in the Nigerian oil and gas industry and (2) employee perceptions and responses to GHRM implementation challenges.

4.1 | Challenges of GHRM Implementation in the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry

Analysis generated six themes on GHRM implementation gaps that typically give rise to inconsistencies between employees' environmental values and organisational practices: (1) outdated and misaligned green policies; (2) resource constraints; (3) structural sidelining of HR; (4) HR managers' limited green expertise; (5) deficient green performance management; and (6) absence and ineffective reward system.

4.1.1 | Outdated and Misaligned Green Policies

Participants expressed concerns about the quality and responsiveness of organisational green policies, which often fail to evolve with emerging environmental challenges: 'If you have rules that are not updated based on what is happening, that is obsolete; the rules will not be effective' (P3). This reflects institutional inertia, as static policies erode the adaptability and legitimacy of GHRM practices, whose effectiveness depends on their continued relevance to evolving environmental demands. Failure to revise policies creates discontinuity, inefficiencies and missed opportunities, ultimately weakening the organisation's capacity to address sustainability challenges and producing 'a disconnect between policy and practice' (P13).

Participants also noted weak oversight mechanisms and ineffective policy governance, with policies neither 'monitored closely' nor 'corrected' when amendments were needed (P29). Ambiguously framed or inconsistently interpreted policies further fuelled implementation disputes, 'leading to struggles with implementation and complaints' (P17). Without robust monitoring, accountability and regular policy revision, GHRM initiatives risk remaining symbolic rather than delivering substantive change. The resulting gap between static policy and dynamic environmental demands creates value–practice incongruence, potentially generating cognitive inconsistency between employees' green values and organisational practices, which may compel them to make cognitive or behavioural adjustments to restore psychological balance.

4.1.2 | Resource Constraints

The data highlight resource constraints as a barrier to effective GHRM implementation. Participants emphasised the dominance of cost considerations, particularly in training budgets: 'When the approved budget for training falls short of what was initially projected, it affects implementation' (P15). Such financial restrictions were perceived to delay the execution of green initiatives and to limit the scope of environment-related awareness programmes (P26).

Beyond financial shortfalls, participants described broader systemic factors. Bureaucratic delays, weak follow-up mechanisms and the absence of long-term investment strategies were said to erode employees' willingness to engage, despite what one participant described as an initial 'mindset for compliance' (P29). Consequently, resource scarcity was viewed not only as a practical constraint but also as a structural barrier that inhibits the development of a green culture, leading some to describe their organisations as displaying 'more like an absence of environmental culture' (P20).

4.1.3 | Structural Sidelining of HR

The findings reveal an 'industry-wide issue' (P25) in how departmental structures inhibit the integration of environmental concerns into HR functions. In the Nigerian oil and gas industry, environmental objectives are typically assigned to the HSE department, with HR confined to a 'supportive' role (P2). HSE is primarily responsible for 'setting environmental goals' (P12) and 'developing job description elements' (P19), while HR is limited to implementing practices such as recruitment and induction based on HSE's directives. This arrangement 'constitutes some form of conflict in driving GHRM' (P12), as departmental objectives are often perceived as competing rather than aligned (P10).

Under this arrangement, GHRM practices are framed around 'strong compliance with HSE regulations' (P19), reinforcing the view that GHRM is HSE-driven rather than a core HR function (P23). As a result, HR lacks 'direct access to deal with environmental issues' (P2), creating a 'gap in integrating environmental policies into HR functions' (P23). Moreover, HSE engages primarily with operational staff and concentrates on accident prevention, leaving large parts of the workforce outside its scope. This siloed structure restricts HR's capacity to drive organisation-wide change, foster a green culture and achieve effective GHRM implementation.

Participants noted that this gap obstructs robust monitoring mechanisms, making it 'challenging to provide feedback and ensure it reaches the right channels' (P28). For example, recruitment-based compliance is systematically monitored, and there is 'no continuous feedback loop' (P19) to support 'continuous improvement' (P1), undermining effective GHRM implementation.

To address these structural barriers, participants proposed empowering HR with a direct mandate to lead environmental initiatives, positioning it as a strategic driver rather than a subordinate to HSE. As one participant argued, HR should be 'a stand-alone department that has the authoritative power to apply a mindset of environmental sustainability and apply it across the board' (P3). Without such reform, the current industry-wide structure, which 'does not touch on all the departments to build their mindset' (P3), continues to render GHRM practices 'weak' (P3) and to limit HR's ability to

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integrate environmental awareness across the workforce or to cultivate a sustained green culture.

4.1.4 | HR Managers Limited Green Expertise

The analysis revealed significant limitations in HR managers' capacity to champion GHRM initiatives, arising primarily from insufficient skills and knowledge. One participant (P3) observed that an HR manager who had transitioned from a technical role lacked the managerial expertise required to drive green objectives through HR practices, illustrating how career pathways can constrain the ability to implement green initiatives effectively. Several participants further noted that awareness of GHRM concepts among HR professionals is limited, with one remarking that 'even the HR professionals may not know about the [GHRM] concept itself' (P16). Accordingly, participants called for targeted professional development for HR managers, including 'certified training in environmental sustainability to deliver the right information to the personnel' (P27), in order to 'spread awareness and build a culture of environmental sustainability' (P28).

Beyond conceptual understanding, a lack of operational experience was identified as a key constraint on HR managers' ability to implement GHRM effectively in field-based departments. Managers unfamiliar with technical operations cannot fully 'appreciate the challenges and implications of operations on the environment' (P22), nor adequately align performance management systems with environmental objectives. Exposure to frontline operational experiences was proposed as a means of bridging this gap, equipping HR managers to ensure that recognition and reward systems for green behaviours are meaningfully linked to the realities of different business segments (P22, P27). Without such experiential grounding, HR managers remain limited in their capacity to lead initiatives that genuinely integrate environmental sustainability into organisational practice.

4.1.5 | Deficient Green Performance Management

The integration of environmental criteria into formal performance appraisals is known to enhance the organisation's environmental performance (Portocarrero et al. 2023). However, the analysis revealed notable shortcomings in green performance management systems. Several participants observed that 'there is no performance management tied to the environmental measures' (P27), while others noted that although environmental actions are evaluated, these assessments fail to capture the breadth or accuracy of employees' contributions. One participant remarked that 'performance metrics on production and operations often overshadow environmental performance metrics, despite their importance' (P12). This imbalance signals a structural prioritisation of operational outcomes over environmental sustainability objectives, thereby undermining the legitimacy of green performance assessment.

Participants also highlighted the absence of robust mechanisms for monitoring compliance with environmental policies. They argued that performance appraisals should 'extend beyond conventional metrics to include an assessment of [employees'] involvement in sustainability initiatives' (P23). Without such integration, GHRM practices risk becoming symbolic exercises rather than genuine drivers of behavioural change.

Further concerns were raised about the punitive orientation of current systems. One participant explained that 'once you are involved in any environmental issue, you go under so many investigations and panels, which in the end can work negatively towards your appraisal and promotion' (P2). Such approaches discourage employee engagement and reflect a failure to align measurement with motivation. These deficiencies weaken accountability, lower morale and diminish the likelihood that employees will 'integrate environmental consciousness into their activities' (P9).

4.1.6 | Absence and Ineffective Green Reward System

Reward systems were widely recognised by participants as crucial in embedding green values into organisational culture: 'If you reward employees for environmentally friendly behaviour, they will have competitive spirit and they will be motivated to do more' (P4). However, in practice, such systems were either absent or poorly implemented: 'There is also no tangible rewards and motivation for employees to be conscious of [green initiatives]' (P13). Where reward mechanisms existed, they were often inconsistently applied, with HR failing to properly recognise every individual's green achievements 'because of cost consideration' (P8).

Exclusionary practices further compounded this challenge. Contractors and service staff, for instance, were excluded from existing green reward systems, generating perceptions of unfairness and 'internal issues within the organisation' (P21). This lack of inclusivity undermines the legitimacy of rewards, diminishes morale and reinforces the view that environmental initiatives are peripheral rather than central to organisational values.

4.2 | Synthesis of GHRM Challenges

These findings reveal a persistent misalignment between organisational strategies and HR practices. Inadequate green policies, resource constraints, the structural sidelining of HR, capability gaps among HR managers and deficient performance management and reward systems collectively undermine effective GHRM implementation. Rather than advancing green objectives, these deficiencies risk positioning environmental responsibility as peripheral to organisational strategy. This creates 'a disconnect between values and actions' (P26), generating cognitive inconsistency (Heider 1946; Osgood and Tannenbaum 1955; Festinger 1957), which in turn shapes the perceptual and psychological conditions that influence employees' environmental beliefs, attitudes and behaviours (Zhang and Sun 2021), issues explored in the following section.

4.3 | Employee Perceptions and Responses to GHRM Implementation Challenges

The GHRM implementation deficiencies identified above form the context in which employees assess their organisations'

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environmental initiatives and discern discrepancies between personal values and organisational practices. The balance perspective within cognitive consistency theory (Heider 1946) emphasises individuals' pursuit of harmony in the relationship between themselves and their environment. This lens implies that employees actively evaluate whether their personal values align with those espoused by their organisation. Cognitive consistency theory also suggests that misalignments generate psychological tension, prompting cognitive and behavioural responses. Accordingly, participants were invited to share their perceptions and interpretations of organisational practices and reflect on the extent to which their organisation's green HR initiatives resonated with their personal environmental values and how they responded to any perceived inconsistencies.

4.3.1 | Perceptions of Cognitive Inconsistency

The findings reveal a widespread perception of ineffective GHRM implementation. Participants frequently cited a gap between organisational rhetoric and practical commitment to environmental sustainability:

> 'Everyone will claim they support sustainability initiatives, but for the actual implementation and support for green HR practices, I will just say "I wonder how" ... . Sad! It is a neglected aspect. The organisation should improve on environmental sustainability.'
>
> (P13)

> 'It makes me feel bad. It is a bitter truth, but I know that one day we are going to get there, but I do not know when that day will be ...'
>
> (P18)

Interestingly, participants did not attribute these deficiencies to deliberate organisational neglect:

> 'It is essential to recognise that these discrepancies may stem from operational challenges or unexpected situations rather than intentional efforts to deviate from stated environmental commitments.'
>
> (P12)

Yet, participants acknowledged that these gaps generated a misalignment between organisational practices and their personal values: 'Yes, ensuring alignment between personal values and organisational practices can be a challenge' (P17). Another elaborated:

> '... while the organisation acknowledges the importance of sustainability, I do not see a full alignment with my personal values. The reason I said that is that there is no synergy between what I believe and the company's values.'
>
> (P13)

These accounts highlight a fundamental tension in GHRM implementation: despite formal organisational endorsement of environmental sustainability, operational shortcomings create a perceived misalignment between organisational green practices and employees' values, reflecting a state of cognitive inconsistency.

4.3.2 | Attitudinal and Behavioural Adjustment

The congruity perspective of cognitive consistency theory (Osgood and Tannenbaum 1955) posits that individuals seek to resolve inconsistencies between personal values and external cues by adjusting their attitudes. Within the GHRM context, this suggests that employees experiencing value-practice misalignment may attempt to restore consistency by disengaging from green initiatives. Our findings provide evidence of this dynamic.

Participants reported that inconsistent organisational support for green HR practices eroded their motivation to engage in green initiatives:

> '... the lack of consistent support for green HR practices affects my motivation to actively participate in sustainability initiatives, as I question the effectiveness of our efforts.'
>
> (P13)

Structural deficiencies, such as inadequate reward systems, were seen as exacerbating this disengagement, fostering indifference towards green efforts:

> 'Yes, in a negative way, if there is no reward system or consciousness, why do I have to make any efforts? I can do what I want to do. It does not really matter to me ...'
>
> (P13)

Such perceptions not only dampen individual engagement but also have a contagion effect on colleagues, weakening collective commitment and preventing the emergence of a green culture:

> 'You know, when it comes to initiatives related to the environment ... they feel demoralised to the point where they do not give their all. Even if there is a need to pay attention to the environment, the employees do not care...'
>
> (P29)

The dissonance perspective (Festinger 1957) posits that individuals strive for consistency between attitudes and behaviours, implying that changes in attitudes are likely to precipitate corresponding behavioural adjustments. Consistent with this expectation, participants reported that their indifferent attitudes directly influenced their behaviours:

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> 'The disconnect between values and practices influences my behaviours, as I am less motivated to engage in sustainable practices when there is a lack of organisational support ...'
>
> (P13)

This alignment between disengaged attitudes and reduced pro-environmental behaviours perpetuates a cycle of inaction, limiting both individual and collective efforts:

> '... they may talk the talk, but when it comes to walking the walk, they retreat to the comfort of their own lives...'
>
> (P7).

> 'It is frustrating. Without collective action, the impact we can make is limited.'
>
> (P26)

These findings underscore that the success of GHRM hinges not merely on policy adoption but on its consistent enactment and cultural reinforcement. Misalignment between organisational green practices and employees' values generates cognitive inconsistency that frequently leads to indifference and inaction. Without coherent implementation and sustained reinforcement, GHRM risks devolving into a symbolic commitment that fails to cultivate pro-environmental attitudes or behaviours in any meaningful way.

4.3.3 | Resilience of Green Beliefs

Despite the perceived inconsistency between organisational green practices and employees' personal values, and the evident effects on attitudes and behaviours, participants did not report any erosion of their underlying green beliefs. Instead, continued endorsement of GHRM was evident: '... overall, there is support for green HR practices among my colleagues and managers' (P12). For some, organisational shortcomings appeared to heighten personal environmental consciousness: 'I become more conscious of environmental safety and think in that direction' (P1).

These findings indicate that, although ineffective GHRM implementation may undermine employees' pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours, it does not appear to erode their core convictions. Indeed, organisational shortcomings may even reinforce these beliefs by sharpening employees' critical evaluation of green practices. The persistence and, in some cases, intensification of green beliefs highlights the resilience of personal environmental values, which appear to act as a stable cognitive anchor even under conditions of cognitive inconsistency.

4.3.4 | Constructive Responses: Advocacy as a Path to Cognitive Consistency

In contrast to the indifference observed among some employees, others responded to GHRM challenges with resilience and constructive attitudes. Participants reported that, despite organisational shortcomings, their commitment to environmental sustainability remained intact. As one noted: '... rather than feeling negative about it, I approach conflicts with a positive mindset' (P10). Another emphasised that their attitude towards environmental sustainability was 'steadfast', regardless of organisational limitations.

This attitudinal resilience translated into corresponding pro-environmental behaviours. Some participants described sustained engagement in green initiatives: 'I continue to actively participate in activities that promote environmental sustainability' (P11). Notably, these behaviours were often channelled into educational advocacy aimed at raising green awareness among colleagues. Rather than resolving inconsistency by adjusting their own cognitions, these employees sought to create harmony by influencing the organisational culture: 'For me, the lack of sustainability awareness reinforces the importance of advocating for environmental sustainability within the organisation' (P16). Such advocacy ranged from structured interventions, such as delivering lectures at professional events to highlight

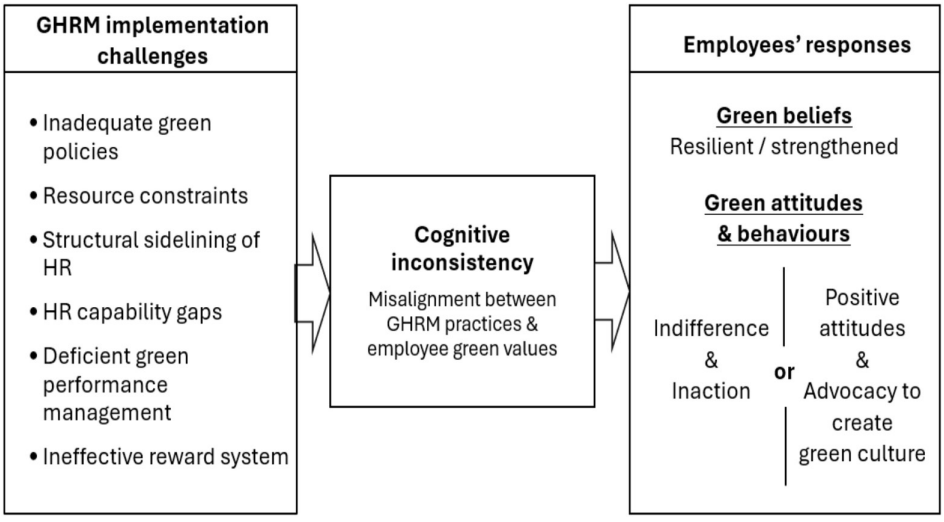


FIGURE 1 | Impact of GHRM implementation challenges on employees' green beliefs, attitudes and behaviours.

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the urgency of collective action (P16), to informal conversational efforts aimed at broadening colleagues' understanding of environmental issues (P18).

These findings (see Figure 1 for a summary) suggest that, for some employees, cognitive consistency is sought not through internal adjustment but by reshaping the organisational culture itself. Educational advocacy emerges as a proactive mechanism for reconciling value-practice misalignment, positioning these individuals as active agents of organisational change rather than passive recipients of GHRM practices. The coexistence of disengagement and advocacy reflects dual pathways of dissonance resolution (withdrawal versus constructive engagement), revealing the divergent responses employees employ to reconcile perceived inconsistencies between personal and organisational environmental values.

5 | Discussion

This study identified six factors that constrain the effective implementation of GHRM in the Nigerian oil and gas industry: (1) outdated and misaligned green policies; (2) resource constraints; (3) structural sidelining of HR; (4) HR managers' limited green expertise; (5) deficient green performance management; and (6) absence and ineffective reward system. Several of these barriers have been documented in previous research. For instance, resource constraints (Ye et al. 2023; Kodua et al. 2022; Renwick et al. 2013) have been linked to insufficient top management green commitment (Gupta and Sharma 1996), while unmotivating reward systems (Bombiak 2020) and inadequate green policy frameworks (Fayyazi et al. 2015) are also recognised as obstacles.

Interestingly, our participants' insights diverged from much of the similar studies from developing countries (e.g., Kodua et al. 2022; Ye et al. 2023) by not framing external factors, particularly government regulation, as barriers. Instead, regulatory frameworks were generally perceived as drivers of GHRM adoption: 'The government, through regulatory bodies ... plays a crucial role in shaping green HR practices. Robust regulations and policies are in place ...' (P22). However, participants also acknowledged that compliance was often motivated by fear of penalties or the pursuit of political rewards (P13), raising questions about the depth of genuine organisational commitment. This finding highlights a paradox: government regulation may stimulate adoption of GHRM practices, but unless internal alignment follows, compliance risks fostering performative rather than substantive change.

Our analysis also highlights findings not widely reported in existing literature. Structural misalignment emerged as a distinctive challenge, with responsibility for GHRM commonly vested in HSE departments rather than HR. While a cohesive framework is essential for effective implementation of GHRM practices (Zubair and Khan 2019), this structural misalignment, which locates responsibility outside HR, undermines the integration of organisational green objectives into HR functions. Similarly, participants emphasised the lack of green competencies among HR managers, a barrier largely overlooked in prior studies that focus on managerial quality in general (e.g., Liang et al. 2024; Bombiak 2020). This deficiency constrains HR's ability to champion GHRM, particularly in engaging operational staff who remain the primary responsibility of HSE departments.

The predominance of production and operational metrics in performance management reinforces this divide, marginalising green objectives and constraining their integration into workplace culture (Sroufe 2017). Excluding certain employee groups from recognition for green actions may foster negative attitudes towards organisational green objectives (Fawehinmi et al. 2022). These barriers generate inconsistencies between employees' environmental values and organisational practices.

The findings are partially consistent with cognitive consistency theory perspectives. From the balance and congruity perspectives (Heider 1946; Osgood and Tannenbaum 1955), employees seek to minimise inconsistencies between organisational environmental initiatives and their own environmental values. Consistent with these theoretical expectations, participants who perceive weak or inconsistent implementation of GHRM reported reduced motivation and disengagement from environmental initiatives, indicating attitudinal adjustments in response to value-practice misalignment. The dissonance perspective (Festinger 1957; Harmon-Jones and Mills 2019) further explains how such attitudinal shifts may extend to behavioural responses, producing attitudinal–behavioural alignment in the form of reduced engagement in environmental initiatives.

However, the findings diverge from theoretical expectations based on cognitive consistency theory, such that employees' green beliefs remain intactand in some cases, even strengthened. This persistence of environmental values suggests that strongly internalised beliefs may function as stable cognitive anchors that resist modification. Several explanations may account for this finding. One possibility is that values and beliefs are relatively stable across time and contexts, making them resistant to change (Arieli et al. 2016; Navas et al. 2005). Another explanation may be drawn from the self-consistency perspective (Aronson 1968), which posits that individuals strive to preserve a positive self-concept. For employees who regard environmental values as integral to their self-image, abandoning pro-environmental beliefs would generate dissonance with their self-concept.

Interestingly, rather than modifying their beliefs, some participants sought to resolve dissonance by engaging in advocacy and educational efforts, aiming to influence organisational culture from within. This suggests that organisational inconsistencies can provoke divergent employee responses: for some, withdrawal and inaction; for others, proactive engagement through educational advocacy. In the latter case, employees act as agents of change in cultivating a greener organisational culture.

Contrary to much of the GHRM literature, which assumes alignment between green beliefs, attitudes and behaviours (Bouman et al. 2018; Wray-Lake et al. 2010; Miller et al. 2022), our findings reveal that organisational inconsistencies may decouple these domains: While beliefs largely remain intact, attitudes and behaviours may diverge, leading either to disengagement or active advocacy. These advances enhance understanding of

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cognitive consistency by demonstrating that, when self-concept is implicated, dissonance can give rise not only to apathy but also to proactive advocacy for a green organisational agenda.

5.1 | Theoretical Implications

This study advances GHRM research by demonstrating the value of applying multiple perspectives of cognitive consistency theory (balance, congruity, dissonance and self-consistency) to examine employees' responses to organisational inconsistencies. Whereas prior work has largely focused on dissonance alone through quantitative designs (e.g., Cheng et al. 2022; Zhang and Sun 2021), this study employs a qualitative approach and applies multiple perspectives of cognitive consistency theory to generate more nuanced insights into how employees navigate conflicting values, either by modifying attitudes and behaviours or by attempting to influence positive green culture through advocacy.

More specifically, our findings reveal that while inconsistencies in GHRM implementation undermine employees' attitudes and behaviours, their beliefs remain resilient. This nuance extends cognitive consistency theory by showing that not all cognitions are equally malleable: Beliefs may act as a cognitive anchor while attitudes and behaviours adjust more readily in response to dissonance. This challenges the traditional assumption in cognitive consistency theory (Heider 1946; Festinger 1957) that inconsistency drives changes across all cognitive domains. We therefore propose a more stratified view of cognitive consistency in organisational contexts, whereby deeply held environmental beliefs remain relatively stable, while attitudes and behaviours are more susceptible to organisational misalignment.

Furthermore, whereas applications of cognitive consistency theory to organisational contexts typically depict employees as passive in resolving organisational inconsistencies, our findings indicate that some employees actively engage in advocacy, seeking to reshape organisational culture rather than merely adjusting their own cognitions. This advances the self-consistency perspective (Aronson 1968) by demonstrating that, when self-concept is implicated, employees may resolve dissonance through proactive agency rather than internal cognitive adjustment. These insights broaden the theoretical scope of cognitive consistency theory by highlighting both the differentiated stability of cognitions and the active role employees may assume in resolving dissonance arising from organisational misalignment.

5.2 | Practical Implications

The findings underscore that ineffective GHRM implementation risks eroding employees' green attitudes and fostering inaction. Organisations in the Nigerian oil and gas industry therefore need to adopt targeted interventions. First, structural reforms are critical: rather than siloing GHRM in HSE departments, embedding it within HR functions and vesting HR with a direct mandate to lead environmental initiatives would provide a more cohesive framework.

Second, building HR managers' green competencies through targeted training is essential to enable them to act as effective champions of environmental sustainability. Strengthening these capabilities will enhance HR's capacity to design, implement and monitor GHRM practices that are inclusive and effective.

Third, performance management and reward systems must recognise all employees' contributions to environmental sustainability. Integrating environmental objectives into appraisal systems, extending recognition to contractors and temporary staff, and designing developmental (rather than punitive) rewards would send a clear signal of genuine organisational commitment.

Fourth, the persistence of employees' green beliefs, even amid organisational inconsistency, represents a strategic opportunity. Companies can leverage this resilience by supporting employee-led advocacy and peer-education initiatives, positioning employees as green champions within their teams and departments.

Finally, the study highlights a paradox in the role of government regulation: While regulation drives adoption of GHRM, compliance often remains performative. Regulators and industry bodies should therefore complement formal rules with stronger enforcement mechanisms and industry-wide capacity-building programmes. Such interventions would help move organisational practices beyond symbolic compliance towards substantive integration of GHRM into organisational strategies. Although grounded in the Nigerian oil and gas industry, these recommendations may also be relevant for other resource-intensive sectors in developing economies.

6 | Limitations, Future Research and Conclusion

This study has several limitations. First, reliance on self-reported data from semi-structured interviews makes the findings susceptible to social desirability and response biases, where participants may manage their self-image in interactions with researchers (Goffman 1959) and align responses with perceived social expectations (King and Bruner 2000; Krumpal 2013). While these biases cannot be fully eliminated, recognising them in the analysis process strengthens the credibility of the findings. In addition, exploring cognitive processes inevitably entails subjectivity, as qualitative analysis is open to multiple interpretations (Braun and Clarke 2021b). Future research could therefore combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to enhance objectivity.

Contextual limitations also apply: Our sample may not fully capture the demographic diversity of the Nigerian oil and gas sector workforce. Nevertheless, the findings provide a foundation for further investigation of GHRM from alternative perspectives within this industry. Comparative studies across different national contexts could also illuminate how political, economic and cultural conditions shape GHRM implementation and employee responses, an area that remains underexplored.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that aligning organisational and personal green values is central to sustaining employees' pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours. Ineffective GHRM creates misalignment, leading to demotivation and disengagement from green initiatives. However, our findings also

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reveal that some employees, anchored by resilient green beliefs, respond through educational advocacy, actively promoting a green organisational culture. Theoretically, this study advances cognitive consistency theory by illustrating that employees may pursue coherence not only through attitudinal and behavioural adjustment but also by initiating change in their surrounding environment. This offers a more nuanced understanding of how dissonance resolution operates when self-concept is implicated, highlighting pathways leading to either withdrawal or agency. Practically, the findings emphasise the need for coherent, inclusive and adequately resourced GHRM strategies as a foundation for environmentally sustainable business practices, particularly in high-impact industries.

Author Contributions

Winifred Aina: conceptualisation, investigation, writing – original draft, methodology, validation, visualisation, writing – review and editing, formal analysis, data curation. **Sachiko Takeda:** conceptualisation, writing – original draft, methodology, writing – review and editing, project administration, data curation, supervision, investigation, software. **Yumei Yang:** conceptualisation, investigation, writing – original draft, methodology, writing – review and editing, project administration, supervision, resources.

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Ethics Statement

This study was approved by the Ethics Committee in the authors' affiliated university by following the guidance of the British Sociological Association ethical framework. Approval Date: 28 July 2023.

Consent

Not applicable. This study did not involve clinical or patient-related research.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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