

The Moderating Role of Meaning of Work in The Relationship Between GHRM and Organizational Commitment

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) and Meaning of Work (MoW) on Organizational Commitment (OC), while testing MoW as a moderator in the GHRM–OC relationship. Although prior studies have widely explored the direct impact of GHRM on employee attitudes, limited attention has been given to psychological factors that explain when green HR practices can strengthen organizational commitment. Addressing this gap, this study positions MoW as a moderating variable. The research involved 111 employees from various organizational sectors in Semarang, Indonesia, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using an online questionnaire and analyzed through multiple regression and moderation analysis. The findings show that GHRM has no direct significant effect on OC, while MoW positively affects OC and strengthens the relationship between GHRM and OC. This study highlights the importance of aligning green HR practices with employees' work meaning.

Keywords: green human resources management; organizational commitment; meaning of work

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Introduction

Over the past few decades, the concept of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has evolved into a critical organizational strategy in response to growing global awareness of environmental crises (Yong et al., 2020). GHRM encompasses a series of systematic, environmentally conscious human resource practices, including green recruitment, sustainable training, environmentally based performance evaluations, and internal communication that fosters a green organizational culture (Pham et al., 2020). International studies have consistently found that GHRM can foster pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors among employees, enhance work engagement, and strengthen organizational commitment (Zaid et al., 2020; Mehta et al., 2021). However, research examining GHRM within the local Indonesian context, particularly in urban areas such as Semarang, remains limited.

As the capital city of Central Java Province, Semarang plays a vital role in Indonesia's economic landscape, driven by industrial, service, and governmental sectors. The complexity and dynamism of business operations in this urban environment require organizations to go beyond mere efficiency and productivity, embracing social and environmental responsibility as part of their strategic focus. In this regard, implementing GHRM is increasingly relevant for companies aiming to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. Nevertheless, the findings of this study reveal that GHRM practices, when implemented in isolation, do not have a statistically significant impact on employees' affective commitment. In contrast, employees' perception of the Meaning of Work (MoW) has a significant direct effect, and further serves as a moderator in the relationship between GHRM and organizational

commitment. This suggests that the effectiveness of GHRM in fostering emotional attachment to the organization hinges on the extent to which individuals perceive their work as personally and socially meaningful (Lysova et al., 2019).

The purpose of this study is to examine the direct effects of GHRM and MoW on employees' affective commitment, as well as to investigate the moderating role of MoW in the relationship between GHRM and organizational commitment. Theoretically, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the limitations of GHRM's direct impact and highlights the critical role of psychological factors, particularly the meaningfulness of work, in bridging organizational policies with employee responses. From a practical standpoint, this study offers valuable insights for HR practitioners in Semarang and similar urban regions, emphasizing that green HR policies should be accompanied by efforts to enhance employees' sense of purpose at work to foster long-term commitment and loyalty.

The novelty of this research lies in its exploration of the moderating role of the Meaning of Work within the Indonesian context, especially in an urban setting like Semarang, which has rarely been the focus of such investigations. Furthermore, this study offers contextual contributions by presenting empirical evidence from actual work environments that reflect the interplay between green HR policies and internal employee factors in shaping affective commitment. The scope of the study is limited to GHRM practices, employees' perceptions of work meaningfulness, and the influence of both on organizational commitment.

Literature Review

Green Human Resources Management (GHRM)

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) refers to the integration of sustainability principles into human resource practices to support an organization's environmental objectives (Renwick et al., 2013). It encompasses a range of activities, including environmentally responsible recruitment and selection, green training and development, environmental performance appraisal, recognition of pro-environmental behavior, and internal communication aimed at embedding sustainability values within the organization (Yong & Mohd-Yusoff, 2016). The primary objective of GHRM is to foster an organizational culture that aligns with ecological principles by reinforcing green behavior among employees (Pham et al., 2020).

Numerous studies have demonstrated the positive impact of GHRM on job satisfaction (Jabbour & de Sousa Jabbour, 2016), employee engagement (Aktar & Islam, 2016), and organizational loyalty (Kim et al., 2019). However, emerging findings also indicate that the effectiveness of GHRM is often contingent on contextual and psychological factors, such as employees' perceptions of organizational values (Mehta et al., 2021). Thus, understanding moderating variables that bridge GHRM practices and employee responses becomes crucial for practical application.

Organizational Commitment (OC)

Organizational Commitment (OC) refers to employees' psychological and emotional attachment to their organization, which influences their desire to remain part of it (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Among the three dimensions, affective commitment is considered the most intrinsic, as it reflects a strong emotional bond, pride in being part of the organization, and a willingness to contribute positively (Meyer et al., 2002). Organizational commitment plays a critical role in driving employee loyalty, productivity, and retention (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982).

Research has shown that OC is influenced by structural factors such as leadership, organizational culture, and HRM practices (Huselid, 1995), as well as psychological aspects like job satisfaction and personal values (Cohen, 2003). Within the sustainability context, GHRM is believed to foster greater organizational commitment by instilling green values that align with the expectations of modern employees (Kim et al., 2019). Nevertheless, variations in empirical findings underscore the need to explore other psychological variables that may strengthen this relationship.

Meaning of Work (MoW)

The Meaning of Work (MoW) is defined as employees' subjective perception that their work holds personal and societal value and purpose (Steger et al., 2012). MoW consists of several core dimensions, including personal significance in one's job, contributions to personal growth, and positive impact on others or the broader community (Rosso et al., 2010). Individuals who perceive their work as meaningful tend to display higher levels of engagement, commitment, and job satisfaction (Allan et al., 2016).

In recent literature, MoW has also been positioned as a moderating factor that enhances the relationship between organizational policies and employee behavior (Lysova et al., 2019). In the context of GHRM, MoW may act as an enabler, as green practices are likely to be more effective when employees find personal meaning in their implementation. For instance, environmental training or sustainability policies are unlikely to significantly affect employee loyalty unless individuals perceive a sense of value or purpose in their work (Saks, 2022).

Hypothesis Development

The strategic implementation of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has increasingly been recognized as a vital approach for addressing organizational sustainability challenges, particularly in light of mounting external pressures for environmentally responsible business practices. The Resource-Based View theory (Barney, 1991) emphasizes that human resources, when managed through a green lens, can serve as a source of inimitable competitive advantage especially when sustainability values are deeply embedded within the organizational culture. As Renwick et al. (2013) argue, structured GHRM practices such as environmental training, green performance appraisal, and ecologically conscious internal communication can strengthen the psychological connection between employees and their organizations.

Kim et al. (2019) found that GHRM contributes positively to organizational commitment, particularly in the dimension of affective commitment, by fostering a sense of belonging and concern for the organization's environmental mission. However, such findings have not yet been fully substantiated in the local context of Indonesia, particularly in urban settings like Semarang, a city characterized by a hybrid economic structure combining manufacturing, service, and government sectors. Despite facing regulatory and social pressures to adopt green practices, companies in Semarang may struggle to elicit strong employee commitment solely through formal policies if such initiatives are not accompanied by the internalization of sustainability values at a psychological level. Grounded in these theoretical and empirical foundations, the first hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H1: Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has a positive effect on organizational commitment.

Furthermore, the concept of Meaning of Work (MoW) has gained increasing attention in explaining employees' emotional attachment to their organizations. According to Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), individuals demonstrate stronger motivation and deeper commitment when they perceive their work as meaningful, aligned with personal life goals, and socially impactful. Allan et al. (2016) note that employees who find meaning in their work tend to exhibit higher levels of loyalty and engagement, irrespective of formal organizational structures. Supporting this, Lysova et al. (2019) emphasize that the perception of meaningful work can be a key driver in shaping affective commitment, especially in sectors that require active employee participation in organizational values.

In the context of Semarang an emerging hub for industry and services, MoW becomes a critical factor for organizations to consider. When employees perceive their work as socially contributive and personally relevant, their likelihood of forming emotional bonds with the organization increases. This leads to the formulation of the second hypothesis:

H2: Meaning of Work (MoW) has a positive effect on organizational commitment.

Building on this, studies by Saks (2022) and Mehta et al. (2021) suggest that the relationship between organizational policies and employee behavior is often indirect, mediated by employees' psychological conditions. In this light, MoW can serve as a moderating variable that strengthens the effect of GHRM on organizational commitment. When employees not only accept green policies as organizational directives but also perceive their work as part of a greater value system, the effectiveness of GHRM in fostering emotional loyalty is amplified. In Semarang, where many organizations are in the midst of transitioning toward sustainable practices, the role of MoW is strategically positioned to bridge formal policy with employee response. Based on this reasoning, the third hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Meaning of Work (MoW) moderates the relationship between Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) and organizational commitment, such that the relationship is stronger when the perception of work meaning is high.

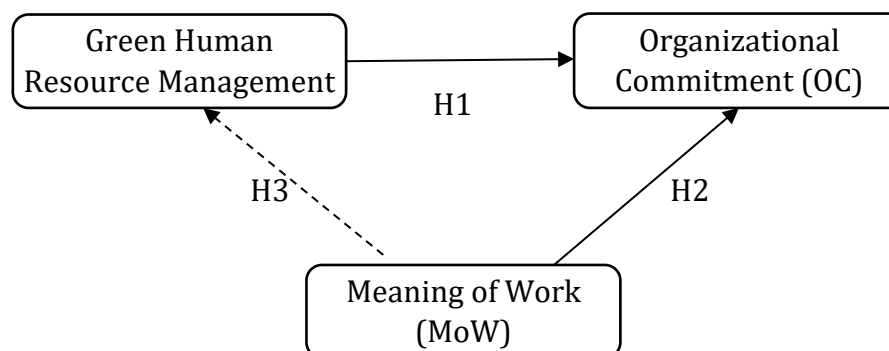


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach using a survey method to examine the relationships among Green Human Resource Management (GHRM), Meaning of Work (MoW), and Organizational Commitment (OC), as well as to analyze the moderating role of MoW in the relationship between GHRM and OC. The research was explanatory in nature, utilizing a causal design aimed at explaining the effects between variables by testing the hypotheses developed based on theoretical foundations and prior empirical studies.

The population of this study consisted of active employees from various sectors industry, services, and government organizations within the Semarang municipality, Central Java. Semarang was selected as the research site due to its status as a regional economic center with a diverse range of organizational types and significant environmental pressures driving the implementation of sustainability principles. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, with criteria including: individuals who had worked for at least one year in their respective organizations, and who possessed a basic understanding of organizational policies, particularly those related to human resource management and work values.

Data were collected through the distribution of an online questionnaire via Google Forms. The research instruments were adapted from standardized tools previously validated in earlier studies. The GHRM variable was measured using items adapted from Renwick et al. (2013), which include environmental training, green work orientation, environmentally friendly performance appraisal, and sustainability-focused internal communication. The MoW variable was measured using indicators adapted from Steger et al. (2012), covering perceptions of work contribution to the world, personal value, and self-development. The OC variable was measured based on the Affective Commitment concept by Meyer and Allen (1991), which refers to emotional attachment to the organization. All items were assessed using a Likert scale, five points for GHRM and OC, and seven points for MoW to capture more nuanced variations in perception.

Before the instruments were used, validity and reliability tests were conducted. Validity was assessed through Pearson correlation analysis, with items considered valid if the correlation coefficient (r) exceeded 0.1865 at a 5% significance level. Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, with a minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70. All items in this study were confirmed to be both valid and reliable.

Data analysis was performed using multiple linear regression to assess the direct effects of GHRM and MoW on OC, and moderation regression analysis to test the interaction effect of MoW in strengthening the relationship between GHRM and OC. All analyses were conducted using the latest version of SPSS. No physical tools or materials were employed in this study, as all data were non-material and collected online. Considering the evolving context of Semarang as an industrial city and a hub of public services, this research aims to provide relevant empirical insights into how organizations can foster employee commitment through sustainability-driven strategies and the promotion of meaningful work.

Results and Discussion

Respondent Characteristics

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	41	36,90%
	Female	70	63,10%
Age	≤ 30 years	74	66,70%
	> 30 years	37	33,30%
Academic Background	High School or equivalent	7	6,30%
	Bachelor's Degree	86	77,50%
	Master's/Doctorate Degree	18	16,20%

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Job Title	Operational/Technical Staff	45	40,50%
	Middle Management	38	34,20%
	Top Management	28	25,20%
Antiquity	≤ 5 years	68	61,30%
	> 5 years	43	38,70%
Sector	Bank and Insurance	18	16,20%
	Commerce, Transport, Distribution	22	19,80%
	Health	20	18,00%
	Public Administration	21	18,90%
	Technology	17	15,30%
	Others	13	11,70%

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results (2025)

Based on Table 1, this study involved 111 employees from various organizational sectors located in the city of Semarang. In terms of gender, the majority of respondents were female (63.1%), while male respondents accounted for 36.9%. This composition indicates a higher level of female participation in this survey, which may influence perceptions of work meaning and organizational commitment, as highlighted in previous studies addressing gender differences in sustainable work environments.

Regarding age, the respondents were predominantly young, with 66.7% aged 30 years or below, and the remaining 33.3% above 30 years. This suggests that most participants belong to a younger generation, who tend to be more concerned with sustainability issues and personal values in the workplace an aspect closely aligned with the Meaning of Work variable in this study. In terms of educational background, the majority of respondents held undergraduate degrees (77.5%), followed by postgraduate education (16.2%) and secondary school or equivalent (6.3%). The relatively high educational level of the respondents supports the assumption that they possess sufficient understanding of GHRM concepts and meaningful work values, and are capable of providing rational responses to the research instrument.

Regarding job position, respondents were distributed across three major groups: operational/technical staff (40.5%), middle management (34.2%), and top management (25.2%). This distribution reflects a diverse representation of organizational levels, enabling a more comprehensive analysis of perceptions toward green HR policies and organizational commitment. In terms of tenure, 61.3% of the respondents had worked for five years or less, while the remaining 38.7% had more than five years of work experience. This indicates a dominance of early- to mid-career employees, who are likely to be more flexible and receptive to new values such as organizational sustainability.

With respect to organizational sector, respondents came from a variety of industries, with the highest representation from Commerce, Transport, and Distribution (19.8%) and Public Administration (18.9%), followed by Health (18.0%), Banking and Insurance (16.2%), Technology (15.3%), and other sectors (11.7%). This sectoral diversity demonstrates that the study encompasses a wide range of organizational types within Semarang, enriching the empirical findings and enhancing the generalizability of the research regarding the implementation of GHRM and the role of work

meaning across different organizational contexts. Overall, the demographic composition provides a strong foundation for interpreting the relationships between environmentally-oriented HRM practices, perceptions of meaningful work, and affective commitment within the framework of contemporary organizations in urban Indonesia.

Validity and Reliability Test

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Test

Variable	Statements	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Reliability
GHRM	Green Recruitment and Onboarding: During job orientation, my company introduces policies related to environmental sustainability.	.569**	0.000	0.774
	Green Training and Development: My company provides training aimed at enhancing environmentally friendly behavior in the workplace.	.683**	0.000	
	Green Performance Management and Rewards: My performance evaluation includes aspects related to contributions to environmental sustainability.	.821**	0.000	
	Green Internal Communication: I regularly receive information from the company regarding environmentally friendly practices.	.779**	0.000	
	Green Organizational Culture: My company promotes a work culture that supports environmental sustainability.	.761**	0.000	
OC	Organizational Pride:	.680**	0.000	0.712

Variable	Statements	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Reliability
MoW	I am proud to be part of this organization.			0.637
	Organizational Loyalty:			
	I feel a strong emotional attachment to my organization.	.676**	0.000	
	Recommendation to Others:			
	I would recommend this organization as a good place to work to others.	.652**	0.000	
	Emotional Involvement and Concern:			
	I genuinely care about the future of this organization.	.727**	0.000	
	Willingness to Contribute Extra Effort:			
	I am willing to put in extra effort to help this organization succeed.	.691**	0.000	
	Positive Meaning in Work:			
MoW	I feel that my work holds significant meaning for me personally.	.657**	0.000	0.637
	Personal Growth Through Work:			
	I see my work as a contribution to my personal growth.	.716**	0.000	
	Work as Life Purpose:			
	I believe that my work is part of my life's purpose.	.646**	0.000	
MoW	Impact on Others / Greater Good			0.637
	I am aware that my work makes a positive difference in the world.	.727**	0.000	
MoW	Sense of Fulfillment at Work:			0.637
		.467**	0.000	

Variable	Statements	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Reliability
	I feel personally fulfilled when performing my work.			

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results (2025)

Based on the correlation analysis of items (as shown in the attached figure), it can be concluded that all indicators used in this study, conducted among companies located in Semarang, meet the criteria for both validity and reliability. This conclusion is supported by Pearson correlation coefficients (r) that exceed the critical value of the r -table (0.1865), with significance values (p -values) of 0.000, well below the 0.05 threshold for two-tailed tests. Thus, all indicators for each variable were found to be valid and reliable for use in this study.

For the Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) variable, all items showed strong and significant correlations with the overall construct. The correlation coefficients ranged from 0.569 to 0.821. The strongest indicator was environmental training ($r = 0.821$), followed by internal communication ($r = 0.779$), and green organizational culture ($r = 0.761$). These results suggest that within the observed companies in Semarang, training and communication efforts related to sustainability are particularly effective in fostering employees' environmental awareness and behavior. Indicators related to onboarding and environmental performance appraisal also demonstrated valid and strong correlations, although slightly lower than the aforementioned items.

For the Organizational Commitment (OC) variable, which focuses on the affective commitment dimension, all indicators displayed strong validity, with correlation values ranging from 0.652 to 0.727. Respondents expressed pride, verbal loyalty, and alignment of personal values with those of the organization. The strongest correlation was observed in the item measuring the intention to stay with the organization in the long term ($r = 0.727$), indicating that the companies studied in Semarang have successfully cultivated work environments that support employees' emotional attachment to the organization.

Meanwhile, the Meaning of Work (MoW) variable yielded correlation values ranging from 0.467 to 0.727. All indicators were valid and statistically significant, though the range of correlations was more varied compared to the other two variables. The highest correlation was found in the item reflecting the perception that one's work contributes positively to the world ($r = 0.727$), followed by the item reflecting the contribution to personal growth ($r = 0.716$). These findings suggest that in the surveyed companies, work meaning is primarily experienced in terms of social impact and personal development. On the other hand, the item related to external recognition for one's work ($r = 0.467$), although valid, showed a relatively lower correlation, indicating that employees are more driven by intrinsic values than by external acknowledgment.

In summary, the findings confirm that the research instruments are highly appropriate for measuring the relationships among GHRM, Meaning of Work, and Organizational Commitment in companies based in Semarang. The effective implementation of green HRM practices and the cultivation of meaningful work perceptions have been shown to contribute significantly to fostering employees' emotional loyalty and commitment to their organizations.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	sig
	B	Std. Error		
H1: Green Human Resources Management (GHRM) has a positive effect on Organizational Commitment (OC)	.150	.132	1.138	.257
H2: Meaning of Work (MoW) has a positive effect on Organizational Commitment (OC).	.426	.080	5,309	0,000

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results (2025)

Based on the hypothesis testing presented in Table 2, it can be concluded that only one of the two proposed hypotheses was statistically supported. For the first hypothesis (H1), which posited that Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices have a positive effect on organizational commitment, the regression coefficient was 0.150 with a t-value of 1.138. Although the t-value exceeds the critical value ($t_{\text{table}} = 0.67675$), the significance level of 0.257 is well above the standard threshold of 0.05, indicating that the relationship is not statistically significant. Therefore, H1 is rejected, implying that GHRM practices do not have a significant impact on organizational commitment in the context of the companies studied in Semarang.

This finding aligns with the study by Ren et al. (2020), which noted that GHRM does not always exert a direct influence on organizational commitment, particularly when sustainability values are not internalized by employees. Similarly, Pham et al. (2020) emphasized that the success of GHRM largely depends on employees' perceptions of ecological value and the personal relevance of organizational policies.

Conversely, the second hypothesis (H2), which proposed that the Meaning of Work (MoW) has a significant effect on organizational commitment, was strongly supported by the data. The regression coefficient for MoW was 0.426, with a t-value of 5.309. This value substantially exceeds the critical t-value and is accompanied by a significance level of 0.000, well below the 0.05 threshold, indicating a highly significant effect. Accordingly, H2 is accepted. These results suggest that employees' perceptions of work meaning play a crucial role in enhancing their emotional attachment to the organization.

This finding is consistent with previous research by Allan et al. (2016) and Lysova et al. (2019), which demonstrated that individuals who find their work meaningful are more likely to develop strong affective commitment. In the context of organizations in Semarang, it can thus be concluded that the Meaning of Work serves as a more influential psychological factor than formal GHRM policies in fostering employees' emotional loyalty to their organizations.

Table 4. Moderation Testing

	Unstandardized Coefficients			
	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
<i>Meaning of Work (MoW) moderates the relationship between Green Human Resources Management (GHRM) and Organizational Commitment (OC), such that the relationship is stronger when MoW is high.</i>	.006	.002	3.698	.000

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results (2025)

Based on the results of the interaction test presented in the regression table, it was found that Meaning of Work (MoW) significantly moderates the relationship between Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) and Organizational Commitment (OC). This is indicated by an interaction coefficient of 0.006, a t-value of 3.698, and a significance level of 0.000, well below the 0.05 threshold. Therefore, the third hypothesis (H3) is supported. This implies that there is a significant and positive interaction between GHRM and MoW in predicting organizational commitment. Specifically, the more meaningful employees perceive their work to be, the stronger the positive influence of GHRM on their emotional loyalty to the organization.

This finding is consistent with prior research that highlights the moderating role of work meaning in strengthening the effects of organizational policies on employee attitudes and behaviors (Lysova et al., 2019; Saks, 2022). Within the GHRM framework, Allan et al. (2016) emphasize that the effectiveness of green HR practices in enhancing organizational commitment depends significantly on the extent to which individuals view their work as personally and socially meaningful. When GHRM practices are not supported by a strong sense of work meaning, their impact on commitment tends to be weak. Conversely, when employees perceive their work as contributing to something valuable, GHRM policies are more effective in fostering a sense of belonging and emotional attachment to the organization (Mehta et al., 2021).

In the context of organizations in Semarang, many of which are undergoing a transition toward sustainable practices, these findings have important implications. They suggest that organizations should not only implement GHRM policies formally but also actively cultivate a sense of meaningful work among employees. By doing so, green HR initiatives can more effectively contribute to strengthening organizational commitment.

Conclusions

This study aimed to examine the influence of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) and Meaning of Work (MoW) on Organizational Commitment (OC), and to analyze the moderating role of MoW in strengthening the relationship between GHRM and OC, using a sample of employees from various organizational sectors in the city of Semarang. The results of the analysis revealed that GHRM had no significant direct effect on organizational commitment. In contrast, MoW had a significant positive influence on OC and served as a moderator that strengthened the relationship between GHRM and OC. These findings suggest that environmentally based organizational policies are only effective when employees have a strong sense of meaning in their work.

From a practical standpoint, the findings suggest that companies in Semarang and more broadly in Indonesia should integrate GHRM strategies with efforts to enhance employees' perception of meaningful work. Training, development, and internal communication programs should not focus solely on environmental aspects, but also emphasize work values that are personally and socially meaningful to employees, in order to foster sustained commitment and loyalty.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. First, the research employed a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to capture changes in employee perceptions over time. Second, the data were collected through self-reported surveys, which may be subject to subjective bias. Third, the sample was limited to organizations in Semarang, which may make generalizations to other regions or sectors less robust.

Given these limitations, future research is encouraged to adopt a longitudinal approach to observe the long-term impact of GHRM and MoW on organizational commitment. Researchers may also consider using mixed-methods approaches to explore in greater depth the psychological and cultural factors that influence perceptions of meaningful work. Furthermore, the development of models that incorporate other mediating variables, such as employee engagement or green identity, may provide a more comprehensive theoretical understanding of how GHRM contributes to organizational commitment.

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