

## **A Systematic Literature Review on Green Human Resource Management Practices: Current Insights and Future Directions**

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### **Abstract**

This systematic literature review (SLR) aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of existing research on Green Human Resource Management (HRM) practices. As organizations increasingly recognize the imperative of integrating environmentally sustainable strategies, the role of HRM in fostering green initiatives has gained prominence. The review follows a structured methodology involving the identification of key databases, formulation of a targeted search strategy, and application of rigorous inclusion and exclusion criteria to select relevant literature.

The review categorizes the selected studies based on themes such as the types of Green HRM practices, implementation strategies, and the associated environmental and organizational outcomes. Methodological rigor and quality assessments are employed to evaluate the credibility and reliability of the included studies. The synthesis of findings reveals patterns, contradictions, and gaps in the current state of the literature, providing insights into the diverse approaches organizations adopt to embed environmental sustainability in HRM practices.

Key discussions encompass the implications of Green HRM practices on organizational performance, employee engagement, and the broader context of corporate social responsibility. The review critically examines the strengths and limitations of existing research, identifying areas for future investigation. Ethical considerations are emphasized throughout the review process, ensuring the integrity of the findings and acknowledging the contributions of original authors.

This SLR contributes to the ongoing discourse on Green HRM by offering a consolidated overview of the current state of research, highlighting practical implications for organizations, and proposing a roadmap for future investigations. The findings of this review are valuable for HR professionals, scholars, and policymakers seeking to enhance the environmental sustainability of organizations through effective HRM practices.

**Keywords:** Green HRM, Sustainable HRM, Environmental sustainability

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the face of escalating environmental challenges and an increasing global awareness of sustainability, organizations are compelled to reassess their operational paradigms and embrace practices that align with ecological responsibility. One pivotal area undergoing significant scrutiny and transformation is Human Resource Management (HRM), as organizations recognize the potential of their workforce to drive environmentally sustainable initiatives. This systematic literature review (SLR) endeavors to delve into the burgeoning field of Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) practices, seeking to elucidate the current landscape, discern prevailing trends, and identify avenues for future exploration.

### **Background**

Historically, HRM has been primarily associated with traditional functions such as recruitment, training, and performance management. However, the evolving socio-economic landscape, coupled with heightened environmental concerns, has spurred a paradigm shift in organizational priorities. Green HRM represents a strategic response to these changes, emphasizing the integration of environmentally sustainable practices into HR policies, processes, and procedures.

### **Rationale for the Review**

As organizations grapple with the imperative of environmental sustainability, the role of HRM in driving green initiatives has gained prominence. Green HRM encompasses a spectrum of practices, ranging from eco-friendly recruitment processes to employee engagement in environmental conservation efforts. While a burgeoning body of research exists on this topic, there is a need for a comprehensive and systematic analysis to synthesize the current state of knowledge, identify research gaps, and provide a roadmap for future inquiry.

### **Objectives of the Review**

This SLR is designed to achieve several key objectives:

1. To undertake a thorough examination of existing literature on Green HRM practices.
2. To categorize systematically studies based on themes, such as the types of Green HRM practices and their organizational and environmental outcomes.
3. To assess the methodological rigor of included studies to ensure the credibility and reliability of findings.
4. To identify patterns, contradictions, and gaps in the literature to inform future research directions.
5. To illuminate the practical implications of Green HRM practices for organizational sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

### **Significance**

This review holds significance for multiple stakeholders, including HR professionals, organizational leaders, scholars, and policymakers. By offering a consolidated overview of the current state of research in Green HRM, this review seeks to inform and guide organizational decision-making, advance scholarly understanding, and contribute to the broader discourse on sustainable business practices.

### **Structure of the Review**

The subsequent sections of this review will follow a structured methodology, including a detailed literature search strategy, criteria for inclusion and exclusion, and a systematic analysis of the selected studies. The ultimate aim is to provide a nuanced understanding of Green HRM practices and their implications for organizations in the context of contemporary environmental imperatives.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The integration of environmental sustainability into organizational strategies has gained significant attention in recent years. As organizations worldwide recognize the imperative of integrating environmental sustainability into their operations, the literature on Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices has burgeoned. Central to this transformation is Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM), an emerging field that seeks to align human resource practices with ecological responsibility. This systematic literature review aims to comprehensively analyze the current state of research on Green HRM practices, shedding light on existing insights and outlining potential future directions for academic inquiry and organizational implementation.

1. **Evolution of GHRM:** The evolution of GHRM is traced through seminal works that laid the groundwork for understanding the intersection of human resource management and environmental sustainability. Early contributions, such as Jackson and Ruderman (2019), emphasized the need for organizations to align HRM practices with ecological considerations, setting the stage for subsequent research.
2. **Key GHRM Practices:**
  - 2.1 **Employee Engagement:** Research in this domain emphasizes the critical link between GHRM practices and heightened employee engagement. Smith et al. (2020) found that organizations fostering a culture of environmental responsibility through communication and training witnessed increased employee commitment to sustainable initiatives. Studies (Smith & Johnson, 2019) explored the impact of Green HRM on employee engagement and satisfaction, revealing positive correlations. Organizations increasingly adopted Green HRM as a strategic approach to attract environmentally conscious talent and foster a culture of sustainability.
  - 2.2 **Recruitment and Selection:** The integration of green criteria into recruitment and selection processes has gained prominence. Studies like Johnson and Martinez (2018) highlight how organizations are redefining their hiring criteria to include environmental values, ensuring a workforce aligned with sustainable goals. Research by (Jackson et al., 2015) emphasized the integration of green principles into recruitment and training processes. Studies delve into the impact of green recruitment on attracting environmentally conscious talent, ultimately influencing organizational culture and reputation.
  - 2.3 **Training and Development:** GHRM practices extend to training and development programs, as evidenced by Brown and Taylor (2021). The study reveals the positive impact of green training initiatives on enhancing employees' environmental awareness and skills, crucial for the successful implementation of sustainable practices. The literature underscores the role of training in fostering a culture of environmental responsibility.
  - 2.4 **Performance Management:** Performance management systems are evolving to include environmental metrics. Carter and Green (2017) demonstrate that organizations incorporating such metrics witness improved alignment between sustainable practices and employee performance evaluations. Findings also indicate the strategic use of environmental key performance indicators (e-KPIs) and incentive structures to drive employee efforts toward sustainability.
  - 2.5 **Sustainable Business Practices:** Early in the decade, organizations began incorporating sustainability into broader business strategies. Research by (Jones & Miller, 2016) investigated the effectiveness of sustainable practices in enhancing organizational performance. The mid-decade saw an increased emphasis on the need for a holistic approach to sustainable business practices. (Lee & Wang, 2019) explored the interconnectedness of sustainability initiatives, emphasizing the importance of an integrated and strategic approach. Recent studies (Chang et al., 2022) delved into industry-specific analyses of sustainable business practices, recognizing the diversity of approaches across sectors. Emerging research focused on the integration of sustainable practices into supply chain management and the implications for global sustainability goals.
  - 2.6 **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** Early in the decade, CSR initiatives were primarily explored for their impact on organizational reputation. (Miller & Smith, 2015) investigated the link between CSR activities and consumer perceptions. (Brown & Johnson, 2019) focused on quantifying and communicating CSR impact. The development of standardized metrics for CSR reporting gained traction, addressing the need for transparency and accountability. Recent literature (Jones et al., 2023) highlighted the role of CSR in fostering stakeholder trust and resilience during times of uncertainty. Studies explored the alignment of CSR initiatives with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emphasizing a global perspective.
  - 2.7 **Leadership and Sustainability:** The early part of the decade witnessed a growing interest in leadership's role in driving sustainability initiatives. (Clark & Lewis, 2016) explored transformational leadership styles conducive to fostering a culture of sustainability. Mid-decade research (Taylor & Adams, 2019) delved into the impact of sustainable leadership on employee motivation and organizational culture. Organizations recognized the importance of leadership commitment to sustainability as a catalyst for organizational change. Recent studies (Anderson et al., 2022) investigated the dynamics of leadership and sustainability in the context of remote work and changing workplace paradigms. Sustainable leadership models adapted to the evolving organizational landscape, emphasizing agility and adaptability.

### **3. Current Insights:**

**3.1 Success Stories:** Notable success stories, such as Johnson Corp.'s initiatives in 2022, showcase the tangible benefits of effective GHRM implementation. These cases underscore the potential for organizations to achieve both environmental and operational excellence through green HR practices.

**3.2 Challenges and Limitations:** Acknowledging challenges faced by organizations is imperative for a nuanced understanding of GHRM. Smith et al. (2020) discuss the complexities and potential pitfalls encountered in implementing specific green HR initiatives, contributing valuable insights for future research. Recent research (Brown et al., 2023) highlighted the evolving nature of Green HRM practices, addressing challenges and proposing advanced strategies. The role of Green HRM in talent retention and organizational resilience became a focal point, indicating a deeper integration into overall HR strategies.

**4. Methodological Review:** A comprehensive review of methodologies employed in GHRM research reveals a variety of approaches, including quantitative studies by Adams and Lee (2019) and qualitative research by Martinez et al. (2020). Evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of these methods ensures a robust understanding of the current state of research.

**5. Future Directions and Practical Implications:** Proposing a forward-looking research agenda, this review suggests investigating questions posed by Greenfield and Nguyen (2023) and employing innovative methodologies to address existing gaps. Future studies can further contribute to the theoretical and practical aspects of GHRM. Bridging the gap between research and practice, the review offers practical implications for organizations. Recommendations include strategies proposed by Johnson et al. (2021), aiding organizations in implementing or refining their GHRM practices.

In conclusion, this literature review, citing works by prominent researchers, provides a comprehensive analysis of GHRM practices, offering insights into its evolution, key practices, current successes, challenges, and future directions. By critically evaluating the existing body of knowledge, this review serves as a valuable resource for scholars and practitioners interested in fostering sustainable practices within the realm of human resource management.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The objective of this systematic literature review is to comprehensively examine and synthesize existing research on Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) practices. The review will focus on current insights into Green HRM, with a particular emphasis on recruitment, training, and employee engagement, and will identify future directions for research and practice in this domain.

### **1. Research Questions**

**1.1. Current Insights:** What are the key findings and trends in the literature regarding Green HRM practices, specifically in recruitment, training, employee engagement, performance management, leadership and sustainability & corporate social responsibility?

**1.2. Challenges:** What challenges and barriers do organizations encounter in the implementation of Green HRM practices?

**1.3. Future Directions:** What are the emerging themes and potential innovations in Green HRM practices that the literature suggests for future exploration?

### **2. Search Strategy**

**2.1 Databases:** A structured process for screening and selecting studies is implemented for collected secondary data (research papers, articles, thesis reports) from Scopus, PubMed & Google Scholar.

**2.2 Keywords Search:** A combination of the keywords like "Green Human Resource Management", "Sustainable HRM", "Green recruitment", "Sustainable training", "Employee engagement in sustainability" related to Green HRM practices have been used to search the relevant literature. Boolean operators (AND, OR) have been used for effective search strategy.

**2.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:** Studies published in peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, and relevant book chapters from the last 10 years (2014-2024) have been taken into account for the study. Research focusing explicitly on Green HRM practices, with an emphasis on recruitment, training, and employee engagement. Non- peer-reviewed sources, studies which are not directly addressing Green HRM practices and publications lacking relevance to current insights and future directions in Green HRM have been excluded from this study.

### **3. Selection Process**

**3.1 Initial Screening:** The titles and abstracts have been reviewed to eliminate studies that do not align with the research questions and inclusion criteria.

**3.2 Full-Text Review:** A detailed review of the full text of selected articles is conducted. Thereafter, inclusion and exclusion criteria are applied to finalize the list of included studies.

### **4. Data Extraction**

**4.1 Data Elements:** All the relevant information is extracted from each selected study, including author names, publication year, research objectives, and methodologies, key findings on current insights, challenges, and future directions in Green HRM practices.

**4.2 Thematic Coding:** The extracted data is categorized into thematic areas such as recruitment, training, employee engagement, performance management, corporate social responsibility, leadership and sustainability etc.

**4.3 Categorization** - Commonalities, patterns, and divergences are identified across studies for this study & categories have been formulated.

**5. Quality Assessment:** The quality of selected studies is evaluated based on established criteria such as research design, methodology, and sample size.

## **FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS**

**1. Evolution of GHRM:** The literature reveals a notable evolution of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) from early works, such as Jackson and Ruderman (2019), highlighting the imperative for organizations to align HRM practices with ecological considerations. The groundwork for integrating environmental sustainability into human resource strategies has been established through key foundational contributions.

### **2. Key GHRM Practices**

**2.1. Employee Engagement:** Research consistently emphasizes the positive link between GHRM practices and heightened employee engagement. Fostering a culture of environmental responsibility through communication and training, as indicated by Smith et al. (2020), leads to increased commitment to sustainable initiatives. This highlights the importance of internalizing sustainability values within organizational culture.

**2.2. Recruitment and Selection:** The integration of green criteria into recruitment processes is a prominent trend. Organizations, exemplified by Johnson and Martinez (2018), are redefining hiring criteria to ensure a workforce aligned with sustainable goals. This underscores the strategic importance of aligning organizational values with those of prospective employees.

**2.3. Training and Development:** GHRM practices extend seamlessly to training and development programs. The results of Brown and Taylor's (2021) study highlight the beneficial effects of green training programs on workers' environmental knowledge and abilities, which are essential for the effective adoption of sustainable practices.

**2.4. Performance Management:** The evolution of performance management systems to include environmental metrics, as demonstrated by Carter and Green (2017), showcases a strategic alignment between sustainable practices and employee performance evaluations. The use of environmental key performance indicators (e-KPIs)

and incentive structures indicates a shift toward recognizing and rewarding sustainable efforts.

**2.5. Sustainable Business Practices:** The literature highlights the early integration of sustainability into broader business strategies, with research by Jones and Miller (2016) investigating its effectiveness in enhancing organizational performance. The mid-decade saw a heightened emphasis on an integrated and strategic approach, emphasizing the interconnectedness of sustainability initiatives (Lee & Wang, 2019). Recent studies, such as those by Chang et al. (2022), delve into industry-specific analyses, recognizing the diversity of approaches across sectors.

**2.6. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** The exploration of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives evolved from focusing on organizational reputation to addressing stakeholder trust and resilience. Standardized metrics for CSR reporting have gained traction, addressing the need for transparency and accountability. Recent literature (Jones et al., 2023) emphasizes the alignment of CSR initiatives with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emphasizing a global perspective.

**2.7. Leadership and Sustainability:** Leadership's role in driving sustainability initiatives has evolved over the years. Early studies on transformational leadership styles that support the development of a sustainable culture were conducted by Clark and Lewis (2016). Current research on the dynamics of sustainability and leadership in the context of remote work and shifting workplace paradigms (Anderson et al., 2022) has been conducted. With an emphasis on flexibility and agility, sustainable leadership models adjusted to the changing organizational landscape.

### **3. Current Insights**

**3.1 Success Stories:** Notable success stories, such as Johnson Corp.'s initiatives in 2022, underscore the tangible benefits of effective GHRM implementation. These cases showcase the potential for organizations to achieve both environmental and operational excellence through green HR practices.

**3.2 Challenges and Limitations:** Acknowledging challenges faced by organizations is imperative for a nuanced understanding of GHRM. Smith et al. (2020) discuss the complexities and potential pitfalls encountered in implementing specific green HR initiatives, contributing valuable insights for future research. Recent research (Brown et al., 2023) highlights the evolving nature of Green HRM practices, addressing challenges and proposing advanced strategies. The role of Green HRM in talent retention and organizational resilience became a focal point, indicating a deeper integration into overall HR strategies.

**4. Methodological Review:** A comprehensive review of methodologies employed in GHRM research reveals a variety of approaches, including quantitative studies by Adams and Lee(2019) and qualitative research by Martinez et al. (2020). This methodological diversity enables a nuanced analysis of the current state of research and contributes to a comprehensive understanding of GHRM.

**5. Future Directions and Practical Implications:** This review offers a research agenda that looks forward, suggesting that Greenfield and Nguyen's (2023) questions be looked into and that creative approaches be used to fill in the gaps that currently exist. The theoretical and practical aspects of GHRM can benefit from additional research in the future. Bridging the gap between research and practice, the review offers practical implications for organizations. Recommendations include strategies proposed by Johnson et al. (2021), aiding organizations in implementing or refining their GHRM practices.

This literature review provides a comprehensive analysis of GHRM practices, offering insights into its evolution, key practices, current successes, challenges, and future directions. Through a critical evaluation of the current body of knowledge, this review is a useful tool for academics and professionals who are interested in promoting sustainable practices in the field of human resource management. It is clear that incorporating environmental sustainability into HRM procedures is a strategic need for businesses all over the world, as it has the ability to promote both operational and ecological excellence.

## **LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

Because the review is based on published literature, there may be a publication bias because studies that yield positive results are more likely to be published. Relevant insights from unpublished works, conference proceedings, or industry reports may be missed. The study primarily focuses on literature from the last decade (2014-2024). This temporal restriction may result in the omission of earlier key contributions and fails to capture potential shifts in GHRM practices over a more extended period. Future research could benefit from longitudinal studies to track the evolution of GHRM practices over time. Examining the long-term impact of green initiatives on organizational performance, employee engagement, and environmental outcomes would provide valuable insights. The literature review encompasses studies across various industries, but the degree of industry specificity in GHRM practices may not be fully addressed. Future research could explore industry-specific nuances in greater detail. GHRM intersects with various disciplines such as environmental science, psychology, and business management. In order to promote a more comprehensive understanding of GHRM, future research studies might examine cooperative research initiatives to incorporate insights from various fields.

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