

# **Green Human Resource Management Practices: Implementation Challenges and Way Forward**

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**Abstract:** *The growing concern for environmental sustainability has invoked the concept of green human resource management (GHRM) that facilitates the formulation of eco-friendly human resource policies, strategies, and practices that drive employees to engage and exhibit work activities and behaviour that will enhance the sustainable environmental performance of the organization. Despite a rising trend of GHRM scholarship in the literature and its increasing application in many organizations as a remedy for ecological degradations, green HRM is still a new phenomenon in many countries and organizations requires more research in this field. Therefore, this paper aims to provide an overview of the concept of green HRM and its practices as well as the challenges of implementing green HRM in an organization and how to overcome them. Secondary data has been used for preparing the paper by reviewing relevant literature. The findings of this review have revealed some green HRM practices like Green HR Planning, Green Recruitment and Selection, Green HR Training, Learning and Development, Green Performance Appraisal System and Green Compensation. Moreover, the major challenges of implementing green human resource management practices were identified as a poor level of knowledge, no rules for practicing, a lack of managerial interest and organizational support, high costs of practicing, and high employee turnover. The study also found that strict rules and regulations, monitoring, courses in universities, training programs, and monetary incentives could be effective solutions for applying green human resource management practices in organizations. This paper contributes by broadening the scope and depth of green HRM and identifying the major challenges and possible solutions to them in ensuring the sustainable environmental performance of organizations.*

**Keywords:** *HRM, Green HRM, Environmental Sustainability, Implementation Challenge*

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## **I. Introduction**

Due to increased worries about the environment throughout the world, businesses are adopting more pro-environmental practices and activities at a faster rate. This makes them more competitive and green (Afsar & Umrani, 2020; Dahiya, 2020; Kautish & Sharma, 2020; Mostafa, 2013). Scholars such as Renwick, Jabbour, Muller-Camen, Redman, and Wilkinson (2016) have posited the essential function of human resource management (HRM) in the pursuit of sustainability. Additionally, an increase in awareness of environmental issues has led businesses to adopt green human resource management (GHRM). GHRM denotes HRM methods that promote favourable environmental results (Renwick et al., 2016). GHRM research has been more important in the last ten years (Chaudhary, 2019; Islam, Hunt, Jantan, Hashim, & Chong, 2019; Kim, Kim, Choi, & Phetvaroon, 2019; Ren, Tang, & Jackson, 2018; Renwick et al., 2016). For example, the literature has indicated the beneficial impact of GHRM on organisational commitment (Kim et al., 2019), financial performance (Nejati, Rabiei, & Jabbour, 2017), and environmental performance (Kim et al., 2019). The GHRM concept is garnering heightened interest from both practitioners and scholars (Gilal, Ashraf, Gilal, Gilal, & Channa, 2019). This has motivated the researcher to undertake this study particularly focusing on the green HRM implementation challenges and their solutions to make the company's environmental performance more sustainable.

## **II. Objectives of the Study**

The broad objective of the study is to provide an overview of the concept of green HRM and its practices as well as the challenges of implementing green HRM in an organization and how to overcome them. However, the specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- To understand the concept green HRM and its practices.
- To identify the challenges of implementing green HRM.
- To suggest some ways to overcome the challenges to implement green HRM.

### **III. Methodology of the Study**

This paper gathered relevant information from secondary sources by reviewing published articles related to green HRM, implementation challenges of GHRM and the suggestions to overcome the challenges. In doing so, author searched on several databases like Google Scholar, SAGE Publication, Emerald Insight, and Sci-Hub, to find the desired articles by using keywords like green HRM, Challenges/obstacles/barriers to GHRM adoption / implementation, strategies/way-out/suggestions to overcome green HRM implementation/adoption.

### **IV. Literature Review**

#### **4.1 Green HRM**

In the new century, companies started to take action on environmental issues that extended beyond just stopping pollution and lowering environmental damage (Renwick, Redman, & Maguire, 2013). And in the modern way of doing things, company goals and environmental goals are combined (Renwick et al., 2013). Organisations must improve their environmental performance and social and ecological sustainability (Ardito & Dangelico, 2018). Environmental management and human resources management are closely related because human resources are the organization's lifeblood and help it succeed in integrating with environmental management (Jabbour, de Sousa Jabbour, Govindan, Teixeira, & de Souza Freitas, 2013). Organisations must embrace green HRM practices, which are "HRM aspects of green management," to encourage employees to be more environmentally friendly at work (Renwick et al., 2013, p. 1). Renwick et al. (2013, p. 4) say that green HRM is "HRM activities that improve positive environmental outcomes". Green HRM employs human resources to implement innovation aimed at enhancing environmental performance, minimising waste, fostering social responsibility, and securing a competitive advantage through ongoing learning and development, while aligning environmental objectives and strategies with the overarching goals and strategies of the organisation (Renwick et al., 2013). Tang, Chen, Jiang, Paillé, and Jia (2018) define green HRM as HRM practices aimed at fostering environmentally sustainable resource utilisation, thereby enhancing overall environmental performance and elevating employee awareness and commitment. "Green HRM is the use of HRM policies to promote the sustainable use of resources within organisations and, more generally promotes the causes of environment sustainability" (Marhatta & Adhikari, 2013, p. 2). GHRM is directly responsible for building a green workforce that knows, values, and uses green initiatives and keeps its green goals in mind throughout the HRM process of hiring, training, paying, developing, and promoting the company's employees (Mathapati, 2013, p. 2). It means the rules, procedures, and systems that make employees of the company green for the good of the person, society, natural environment and business (Opatha & Arulrajah, 2014, p. 104). Green HRM practices and systems make the people who work for the company green for the good of the business, the environment, and the people who live there (Opatha & Arulrajah, 2014). They also make sure the environment is safe (Jabbour & Santos, 2008).

Green HRM practices enable businesses hire people who are green and can understand and appreciate green projects. Mishra (2017) contends that green HRM is integrated into the HRM processes of planning, recruitment and selection, training and development, and pay and appraisal, with the objective of sustaining environmental goals. The rise of green HRM includes making people more aware of environmental issues (i.e., less waste), as well as increasing their social (i.e., work-life balance) and economic well-being (i.e., sustaining profits). Green HRM has actually helped people understand the idea of the "triple bottom line." In other words, green HRM includes practices that are in line with the three pillars of sustainability: environmental, social, and economic balance (Opatha & Arulrajah, 2014). These practices will help the organisation in the long run (Mishra, 2017).

Green HRM is using ideas and principles from environmental management in the way that people are hired, trained, and managed (Renwick, Redman, & Maguire 2008). A supportive work environment that includes green HR practices is linked to an employee's readiness to come up with and put into action ideas that are good for the environment (Babiak & Trendafilova, 2011; Evangelinos, Nikolaou, & Leal Filho, 2015). Green HRM is using environmental management ideas in different parts of HRM, like hiring, managing performance and reviews, training and development, employee relations, pay and rewards, and leaving the company. It has been suggested that green HRM might be assessed by acknowledging its multifaceted characteristics (e.g., Renwick et al., 2013). For instance, Jabbour, Santos, and Nagano (2008) contended that enhancement of environmental performance relies on the comprehensive utilisation of training, collaboration, evaluation of environmental objectives, non-monetary incentives, and organisational cultures.

Research examining the multidimensional characteristics of green HRM acknowledges its various interconnected dimensions. For instance, Perron, Côté, and Duffy (2006) said that green HRM should encompass environmental vision, training, assessment of employees' environmental performance, and the implementation of reward programs. Renwick et al. (2013) proposed that the selection, recruitment, training, and development of environmental knowledge should be regarded as integral components of green HRM.

## **4.2 Green HRM Practices**

GHRM is a priority for both rich and developing countries because it is needed all across the world (Mehrajunnisa, et al., 2022). Numerous studies have delineated critical focal points for GHRM and documented the influence of green HRM practices on environmental performance in both developed and developing nations. (Yong et al., 2020; Usman & Mat, 2021). Studies indicate that Green HRM is essential and advantageous for all employee procedures, from recruitment to termination (Ali et al., 2020; Koshish, 2019). Research has delineated the implementation of GHRM across multiple HRM processes as follows (Ali, et al, 2020; Koshish, 2019; Mukherjee et al, 2020; Saha et al, 2020):

### **4.2.1 Green HR Planning**

The process figures out how many and what kinds of personnel are needed to plan and carry out organisational operations (like ISO 14001) and uses cooperation and cross-functional groups to make employment plans. One of the researches published in-depth results on the main effect of ISO 14001 (Waxin et al., 2019). Some firms are currently predicting how many people and what kinds of employees they will need to carry out corporate environmental management initiatives, programs, and activities (e.g. ISO 14001, cleaner production, responsible care, etc.). Some of the best companies have used these techniques to deal with their environmental problems. The corporate environmental management programs need some new jobs and a certain set of abilities. In this case, green human resource planning is needed. These companies also make plans to fulfil the expected demand for environmental services, such as hiring consultants or specialists to do energy or environmental audits. Sometimes, they even outsource this work. The prior literature did not explicitly delineate the activities associated with the function of green human resource planning.

### **4.2. 2 Green Recruitment and Selection**

This job is to find the most creative and innovative individuals and bring in the proper people who will help the company reach its green goals. This means asking questions about the environment during interviews and hiring people who are aware of and know about green issues.

Companies can find and hire people who care about the environment (Jabbour et al., 2008). Green hiring and selection are seen as significant parts of green HRM practices (Yusoff & Nejati, 2019).

### **4.2.3 Green Orientation**

At the time of orientation, the goal should be to pick the best candidate for the job and give them the correct information about how the company does things in an environmentally friendly way.

### **4.2.4 Green HR Training, Learning and Development**

It is highly important for GHRM to design and offer ongoing training programs, projects, workshops, and seminars on how to use resources properly, keep people healthy, and cut down on environmental damage. The creation of a strong green management framework is directly related to ongoing environmental training and development and raising awareness of environmental issues. Green training and development are activities that encourage employees to learn how to safeguard the environment and pay attention to environmental challenges. This is important for reaching environmental goals (Jabbour, 2011). Training can enhance employees' awareness, knowledge, and competencies about environmental initiatives (Sammalisto & Brorson, 2008). Baumgartner and Winter (2014) discovered that the adoption of corporate environmental practices—such as training employees to care for the natural environment, raising environmental awareness, and empowering them to improve their skills and self-efficacy in effectively addressing environmental issues would facilitate the adoption of responsible environmental behaviour, manifesting as pro-environmental behaviours. Green training also teaches employees how to manage information so they may do things that are good for the environment.

### **4.2.5 Green Performance Appraisal System and Green Compensation**

Establishing targets for reaching environmental goals and incentivising based on achievements is a method for fulfilling the organization's ecological responsibilities.

Green performance management and assessment entails a framework for assessing employee performance in the context of environmental management (Jabbour et al., 2008). Green performance management develops green performance indicators to set a framework of environmental criteria for all members in performance evaluations, encompassing aspects such as environmental incidents, responsibilities, carbon emission reduction, and the communication of environmental issues and policies. Assessing managers' environmental outcomes highlights their responsibility in environmental management, perhaps enhancing their accountability for performance in this domain. It is essential to identify sustainable outcomes and hold managers accountable for environmental management performance.

An alternative method to assess green performance involves evaluating the consequences of members who fail to fulfil environmental management indicators or do not comply with green objectives (Jackson et al., 2011). Employing these negative measures judiciously may encourage personnel to adopt environmentally conscious behaviours and pursue sustainability objectives in their future endeavours. Green remuneration may encompass monetary incentives or non-monetary acknowledgement, such as additional holidays, family benefits, or other awards for achievements. Aligned with a strategy framework for reward management, green reward and compensation constitutes a system of financial and non-financial incentives designed to attract, retain, and motivate personnel to advance environmental objectives (Jabbour et al., 2013). It has been posited that employees may derive greater motivation from nonfinancial incentives, like as recognition and appreciation, associated with green pay and benefits (Jabbour et al., 2008; Jackson et al., 2011). Incentives and rewards may be more effective mechanisms for matching employee performance with organisational objectives than alternative approaches within the HRM system. Nonetheless, most researchers concur that the integration of monetary and nonmonetary incentives is more efficacious in motivating employees (Jabbour et al., 2008; Renwick et al., 2013). Nonfinancial rewards should be provided in conjunction with financial incentives, including green travel advantages, green taxation, and green recognition.

#### **4.2.6 Green employee relations**

Employee relations pertain to the facet of Human Resource Management focused on fostering harmonious employer-employee relationships. The relationship enhances staff enthusiasm and morale, thereby increasing productivity. Employee relations fundamentally encompass activities related to employee participation and empowerment. It also aids in preventing and resolving workplace issues that may impact productivity. Positive employee relations are an intangible and lasting asset, serving as a source of competitive advantage for any organisation. Employee involvement in Green initiatives enhances the likelihood of effective green management by aligning employees' objectives, skills, motivations, and perceptions with sustainable management methods and systems. Renwick et al. (2008, 2013) proposed specific environmentally sustainable employee interactions and union management approaches. The initiatives encompass employee engagement in green suggestion programs and problem-solving groups, staff autonomy to develop and test green concepts, incorporation of employee participation in maintenance activities, establishment of a helpline for guidance on environmental issues, customisation of green involvement programs to align with industry standards, enhancement of supervisory support behaviours in environmental management, negotiation between unions and management to establish green Employee involvement in Green projects enhances the likelihood of improved environmental management. It aligns employees' objectives, competencies, motivations, and perceptions with sustainable management practices and systems. Employee involvement in environmental management (EM) has been documented to enhance EM systems by optimising resource utilisation (Florida & Davison, 2001), minimising waste (May & Flannery, 1995), and decreasing workplace pollution (Kitazawa & Sarkis, 2000).

#### **4.2.7 Green Exit**

When employees quit online or through a portal, exit interviews should include a discussion of how to meet green goals, criticism for not meeting green goals, and e-certificates for employees who worked to do green things while they were with the company.

### **V. Green HRM implementation Challenges:**

The implementation of Green Human Resource Management (HRM) techniques has numerous problems, including technical, financial, and organisational obstacles. These problems are essential for HR professionals to tackle as they seek to incorporate environmental sustainability into human resource practices. Research has highlighted the significance of fostering pro-environmental behaviour among employees using Green HRM practices to develop a green organisational culture and improve environmentally sustainable behaviours (Saeed et al., 2019; Gilal et al., 2019). Green HRM is regarded as a strategy for attaining financial, social, and ecological objectives over the long term, highlighting the importance of green strategies and practices inside organisations (Obeidat et al., 2023). Nonetheless, the execution of Green HRM is not without difficulties. Identified barriers encompass insufficient knowledge, limited regulations and assistance, elevated expenses, and staff turnover, which hinder the efficient implementation of Green HRM practices inside organisations (Tsymbaliuk et al., 2021). Obstacles such the intricacy of green technology adoption, inadequate organisational support, employee opposition, and a deficiency in cultural awareness impede the effective execution of Green HRM (Miao et al., 2023). Notwithstanding these hurdles, employees' intrinsic motivation, shaped by green ideals integrated into organisational practices such as Green HRM, can foster positive environmental behaviours (Fawehinmi et al., 2020). Moreover, the function of leadership in advancing Green HRM practices and the connections between management, Green HRM, and employees' environmentally friendly behaviours require additional investigation (Islam et al., 2021). Studies have shown that the effective

execution of Green HRM practices can yield advantages including the promotion of an environmentally sustainable organisational culture, increased resource efficiency, enhanced corporate reputation, and improved economic and ecological performance (Suharti & Sugiarto, 2020). The indirect positive effect of Green HRM practices on corporate social responsibility in small and medium firms underscores the wider implications of Green HRM outside the organisational sphere (Wen et al., 2022). Although Green HRM demonstrates potential for promoting environmental sustainability in organisations, it is essential to overcome the identified problems and impediments for successful implementation. Addressing technical, financial, and organisational challenges via proficient leadership, employee empowerment, and a nurturing organisational culture can facilitate the realisation of Green HRM's full potential in fostering sustainable practices and behaviours. A comprehensive literature study reveals numerous conclusions concerning the obstacles to GHRM acceptance and the degree of readiness for GHRM implementation. A Nigerian study in the hotel sector indicates that insufficient awareness is the primary obstacle to implementing Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) (Emmanuel et al., 2020). Research from the Gulf region and UAE indicates that the initiative and commitment of an organization's senior management is the most significant facilitator for advancing GHRM (Mehrajunnisa, et al, 2022). Additional studies confirm that inadequate GHRM practices mostly result from a lack of coherence between employees and administrators, since the latter fail to engage in strategic planning (Emmanuel et al., 2020). This results in a functional delay, and the adoption of environmentally sustainable activities is minimal. Research suggests that senior management should implement GHRM to align values with the company's objectives (Aboramadan & Karatepe, 2021). The absence of governmental backing and the minimal importance assigned to environmentally sustainable practices by the organisation are contributing factors (Emmanuel et al., 2020; Mehrajunnisa et al., 2022). Certain research highlighted that innovation and staff dedication are recognised as the fundamental components for green performance and green culture (Sharma et al., 2021). A study on Egyptian travel agencies indicates that these organisations do not implement GHRM due to various obstacles, including insufficient knowledge, inadequate training, and a lack of commitment from top management (Bassam Samir Al-Romeedy, 2019).

A study conducted in the Indian textile industry revealed significant challenges in the adoption of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM), associated with elevated water pollution, emissions, and an increased carbon footprint (Sharma et al., 2021). A study in the Indian higher education sector indicates that the full adoption of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) in the education business is unfeasible due to the demands associated with students, personnel, and requisite documentation (Mukherjee et al., 2020).

Moreover, GHRM is crucial for fostering a green culture and mitigating pollution. Research indicates that Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) correlates with green employee empowerment and emphasises that the green values of individual employees influence the beneficial association between green employee empowerment and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour for the Environment (OCBE) (Hameed et al., 2020). Research indicates a substantial positive correlation between Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) and Personal Moral Norms (PMN), as well as a significant positive correlation between Personal Moral Norms (PMN) and Employee Green Behaviour (EGB) (Fawehinmi et al., 2020). Nonetheless, the changing of employee behaviour is time-intensive, and not all employees may exhibit equal commitment to this objective. Moreover, GHRM is a protracted process, and a pertinent problem is recruiting individuals who possess a comparable commitment to the organization's green HRM objectives. According to one study, GHRM is not a legal requirement, and hence corporations are not obligated to comply (Saha, et al., 2020). A study employing an integrated structural model identified three important challenges to combining personnel management with sustainable HRM: 'uncertain career growth,' 'industry dynamism,' and 'lack of training programs' (Gardas et al., 2019). To address the environmental issues within the hotel industry, personnel should face penalties for any violations of sustainable practices (Nisar, et al., 2021). Comparable results have been documented in the hotel industry in Jordan (Al Rawashdeh et al., 2021). Employees' impressions of the workplace are crucial in shaping their environmental attitudes, behaviours, and practices (Morgan & Rayner, 2019). This is due to the fact that both environmental knowledge and global environmental attitudes are individual-specific traits, while personal values and ecological aspirations are crucial determinants for the attainment of organisational environmental objectives.

## **VI. How to Overcome the Challenges**

To achieve GHRM, we need to first look at how green hiring, green recruitment, and green training and development affect things. There is a greater likelihood that uniting individuals with similar ideologies to form a driving force can expedite the implementation of green procedures. Second, government and business leaders need to come up with plans for promoting and rewarding the use of GHRM. Employees' individual ambitions and moral standards are powerful forces that can work together to speed up the adoption and use of GHRM. Thirdly, it is necessary to identify the pertinent training and development areas, drawing from successful examples. For this research, people from the government, business leaders, and others who are studying the

SDG accomplishments should all work together. Fourthly, study is needed to find out what motivates different business sectors to use GHRM. Lastly, we need to find the things that can make processes like green hiring, green training, and green recruitment move forward. The research should investigate the determinants that can unite individuals with similar perspectives to expedite the adoption of GHRM. Additionally, research examining individual green objectives and personal moral standards of employees as factors and predictors of GHRM is essential. One major challenge that the research points out is that employees don't know enough about environmentally friendly behaviours, even though Green HRM policies have been put in place (Fawehinmi et al., 2020). This lack of expertise can make it harder for the organisation to carry out green activities successfully. To solve this problem, companies can focus on giving their staff thorough training and education programs to help them understand green practices and why they are important (Sheikh, 2019). Another problem with putting Green HRM into practice is that human resource activities need to be in line with environmental management, which means that organisations need to shift their attention to a green strategy (Jnaneswar, 2023). To get over this problem, companies can make environmental sustainability a key priority in all of their HR procedures and decisions and include green goals in their overall business strategy. Additionally, the effective execution of Green HRM solutions may hinge on employees' organisational citizenship behaviour regarding environmental stewardship (Khalid et al., 2021). To promote this kind of behaviour, companies should create a culture of environmental responsibility and sustainability by recognising and rewarding workers who take part in green initiatives. Understanding barriers and drivers are also very important for putting Green HRM into action (Miao et al., 2023). Organisations can make it easier for people to embrace green practices by finding and fixing problems like reluctance to change, not having enough resources, or not getting enough support from leaders. At the same time, using things like giving employees more power and letting them help make decisions can help people embrace and use Green HRM methods (Yusliza et al., 2017). Finally, businesses can make Green HRM work by focussing on teaching and raising awareness among employees, making sure that HR activities are in line with environmental goals, encouraging a culture of environmental responsibility, getting rid of obstacles, using drivers, and making green goals part of the overall business strategy.

## VII. Conclusion

This review indicates that enhancing the scope and depth of green HRM practices enables organisations to elevate their environmental performance sustainably. Green HRM practices serve as potent instruments for rendering organisations and their operations environmentally sustainable. The green performance, behaviours, attitudes, and competences of human resources can be influenced and modified through the use of green HRM strategies. Therefore, we propose that businesses prioritise the greening of each function within Human Resource Management and intensely involve in finding the critical challenges in the way of implementing GHRM in the organization by overcoming them effectively.

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