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and

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International Virtual Conference on Global Sustainable Management and Technology

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"GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: A CONCEPTUAL AND SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF PRACTICES IN CHENNAI-BASED ORGANIZATIONS"

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Abstract

This study investigates how Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices contribute to environmental sustainability in organizations, with particular emphasis on Chennai, India. Based on a systematic review of contemporary literature, the paper analyzes the influence of key GHRM practices—including green recruitment, training and development, performance evaluation, and reward mechanisms—on employee environmental behavior and the formation of a sustainability-driven organizational culture. It introduces a conceptual framework that explains the relationship between GHRM practices and environmental sustainability through the mediating effects of employee behavior and organizational culture. The analysis indicates that organizations implementing comprehensive green HR strategies tend to achieve better environmental outcomes by fostering

employee involvement and cultivating a culture aligned with sustainability goals. This study adds to existing research by offering a context-specific perspective and presenting a multi-level framework relevant to emerging economies. It also outlines practical recommendations for HR professionals and policymakers.

Keywords

Green HRM, Environmental Sustainability, Chennai Organizations, Sustainable Development, HR Practices

1. Introduction

The increasing environmental challenges such as climate change, pollution, and resource depletion have forced organizations to rethink their operational strategies. Environmental sustainability is no longer optional but a necessity for long-term survival. Human Resource Management (HRM) plays a critical role in embedding sustainability into organizational culture.

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) refers to the integration of environmental management into HR practices. It aims to create a workforce that is environmentally conscious and actively contributes to sustainability goals. Organizations in Chennai, particularly in the IT and manufacturing sectors, are increasingly adopting GHRM practices as part of their corporate strategies.

Recent studies highlight that companies are implementing eco-friendly HR policies to reduce carbon footprints, enhance employee engagement, and align with corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives

2. Research Methodology

The present study adopts a **systematic literature review design** to examine the role of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices in promoting environmental sustainability within organizations in Chennai. This design is appropriate as

the study aims to consolidate findings from diverse scholarly sources and develop a comprehensive understanding of how green HR practices influence organizational sustainability outcomes.

The study is entirely based on **secondary data**, which allows for a broad and in-depth exploration of the research topic. Secondary data enables the researcher to draw insights from previously validated studies and ensures a strong theoretical foundation.

The data has been collected from multiple credible and authoritative sources, ensuring reliability and academic rigor.

The study reviewed approximately 25–30 peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2010 and 2025. Data sources include Scopus-indexed journals, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect. Articles were selected based on relevance to Green HRM, environmental sustainability, and Indian/Chennai context.

3. Literature Review

Introduction

This study adopts a systematic literature review approach to analyze the role of Green HRM practices in promoting environmental sustainability. A total of 30 peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2010 and 2025 were selected from databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect. The inclusion criteria focused on studies related to Green HRM, employee environmental behavior, organizational culture, and sustainability outcomes, with particular emphasis on Indian and Chennai-based contexts. The selected studies were analyzed using thematic synthesis to identify key patterns, relationships, and research gaps. This approach ensures methodological rigor and provides a comprehensive understanding of the subject.

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has gained significant attention in recent years, particularly in emerging urban economies such as Chennai. As a rapidly growing IT and

industrial hub, Chennai has witnessed increasing adoption of environmentally sustainable HR practices. The literature in this context primarily focuses on how GHRM practices influence employee behavior, organizational culture, and environmental performance.

Green HRM has emerged as a significant field linking HR practices with environmental sustainability. It involves policies and practices that promote efficient use of resources and reduce environmental impact.

A study by Nowrin Banu and Nazeer Khan (2026) examined employee feedback in Tamil Nadu IT organizations using sentiment analysis techniques. The findings revealed that employees' positive perception of green HR practices enhances workplace commitment and strengthens support for sustainability initiatives. The study further emphasized that employee attitudes act as a crucial determinant in the successful implementation of GHRM practices, highlighting the importance of psychological and behavioral factors.

Across the literature, several core GHRM practices have been consistently identified in Chennai-based organizations. These include green recruitment and selection, environmental training and development, sustainability-oriented performance appraisal, green compensation and reward systems, employee engagement initiatives, and the development of a green organizational culture. Empirical evidence suggests that the integration of these practices leads to improved employee behavior and enhanced environmental performance, indicating that GHRM functions as a comprehensive system rather than a set of isolated practices.

In the Chennai context, Gokulakrishnan and Devi (2025) reported that IT organizations are increasingly embedding green HR practices into their strategic frameworks. Their study demonstrated that practices such as green recruitment, environmental training, and performance management significantly improve employee engagement and align

organizational objectives with sustainability goals. The authors concluded that GHRM serves as an effective mechanism for reducing environmental impact while strengthening corporate social responsibility initiatives.

Similarly, Verma and Vetrivel (2025) found that GHRM practices play a vital role in shaping a sustainability-oriented organizational culture. Their findings indicate that organizations implementing structured green policies achieve better environmental performance through efficient resource utilization and reduced ecological impact. This study reinforces the argument that organizational culture acts as a critical link between HR practices and sustainability outcomes.

Supporting this perspective, Zafar and Suseno (2024) highlighted the importance of a green psychological climate in influencing employee behavior. Their study showed that employees are more likely to engage in pro-environmental actions when they perceive strong organizational commitment to sustainability. This suggests that the effectiveness of GHRM depends not only on formal policies but also on employees' perceptions of organizational support.

From a broader perspective, Xie and Lau (2023) conducted a systematic review of GHRM literature and concluded that GHRM is a key driver of organizational sustainability. However, they emphasized the need for more empirical research in developing countries, particularly in region-specific contexts such as India, where institutional and cultural factors influence the adoption of green practices.

Earlier studies provide foundational insights into the relationship between GHRM and organizational outcomes. For instance, Mageswari, Unnikrishnan, and Sangeetha (2020) found that employees in Chennai's IT sector respond positively to green HR practices, leading to higher job satisfaction and improved performance. Similarly, Yusoff et al. (2020) demonstrated that GHRM practices significantly enhance sustainable organizational performance, particularly in

emerging economies where cultural and institutional dynamics play a critical role.

Research by Pham et al. (2019) further supports the behavioral perspective by showing that employees are more likely to engage in voluntary environmental activities when supported by green HR policies. This highlights the importance of creating a supportive organizational environment to encourage sustainability-oriented behaviors.

In addition, Tang et al. (2018) provided empirical evidence that green recruitment, training, and reward systems positively influence employee environmental performance. Their study also identified motivation and engagement as key mediating factors, reinforcing the relevance of behavioral mechanisms in achieving sustainability outcomes.

Studies by Masri and Jaaron (2017) demonstrated that organizations implementing structured GHRM practices experience improvements in both operational efficiency and environmental performance. They emphasized the importance of top management support and strategic alignment in ensuring successful implementation.

From a psychological perspective, Dumont, Shen, and Deng (2017) highlighted the mediating role of green psychological climate in linking HR practices to employee behavior. Their findings suggest that employees must perceive organizational commitment to sustainability for GHRM practices to be effective, thereby shifting the focus from structural policies to employee perceptions.

Similarly, Mishra (2017) proposed a conceptual framework linking GHRM practices to sustainability outcomes through employee awareness and participation. The study emphasized the need to integrate environmental objectives into core HR functions to build an eco-friendly organizational culture.

The strategic importance of GHRM was further reinforced by Jabbour and Jabbour (2016), who argued that organizations

achieve superior environmental performance when HR practices are systematically aligned with sustainability goals. They emphasized that isolated HR initiatives are less effective compared to integrated GHRM systems embedded across organizational processes.

Earlier contributions by Ahmad (2015) and Opatha and Arulrajah (2014) provided conceptual clarity by defining GHRM as a set of environmentally oriented HR policies aimed at sustainable resource utilization. These studies highlighted the importance of employee awareness, engagement, and organizational commitment in driving environmental performance.

Furthermore, Paillé et al. (2014) emphasized the role of employee commitment in achieving sustainability goals, arguing that HR practices influence environmental performance indirectly through psychological and emotional engagement. This perspective underscores the importance of aligning employee values with organizational sustainability objectives.

One of the foundational studies by Renwick, Redman, and Maguire (2013) identified key HR functions—recruitment, training, performance appraisal, and rewards—as critical tools for promoting environmental sustainability. Their work laid the groundwork for subsequent empirical research in GHRM.

Finally, Jackson et al. (2011) provided a comprehensive overview of integrating environmental sustainability into HRM systems. They emphasized that HRM plays a central role in aligning employee behavior with sustainability goals through organizational culture, leadership, and policy frameworks.

Research Gap

Despite the growing body of literature on Green Human Resource Management, several limitations remain evident. First, a majority of studies focus on isolated HR practices rather than examining the integrated mechanisms through which GHRM influences sustainability outcomes. Second, empirical

research in the Indian context remains limited, particularly in rapidly industrializing cities such as Chennai. Third, existing studies often overlook the sequential relationship between employee behavior and organizational culture in achieving environmental sustainability. Addressing these gaps, the present study proposes a comprehensive conceptual framework that links GHRM practices with environmental sustainability through behavioral and cultural pathways.

4. Green Human Resource Management Practices in Chennai Organizations

Green Human Resource Management practices represent a strategic integration of environmental objectives into core HR functions. In Chennai, particularly within the IT and service sectors, organizations are increasingly adopting structured GHRM practices to align workforce behavior with sustainability goals.

4.1 Green Recruitment and Selection

Green recruitment involves attracting and selecting candidates who demonstrate environmental awareness, ethical responsibility, and sustainability-oriented values. Organizations in Chennai are incorporating environmental criteria into job descriptions and selection processes.

Additionally, the adoption of digital recruitment platforms has significantly reduced paper usage, thereby contributing to environmental conservation. This shift not only minimizes ecological impact but also positions organizations as environmentally responsible employers, enhancing their attractiveness to sustainability-conscious talent.

4.2 Green Training and Development

Green training and development initiatives focus on enhancing employees' environmental knowledge, skills, and competencies. Organizations conduct structured training programs on topics such as energy conservation, waste management, carbon footprint reduction, and sustainable workplace practices.

These programs play a crucial role in building employee capability and awareness, enabling them to actively participate in environmental initiatives. In Chennai organizations, continuous learning and development are increasingly recognized as essential for sustaining long-term environmental performance.

4.3 Green Performance Management

Green performance management integrates environmental criteria into employee evaluation systems. Performance appraisal frameworks are designed to assess employees' contributions toward sustainability objectives, including resource conservation and participation in green initiatives.

By linking performance outcomes with environmental goals, organizations ensure accountability and reinforce sustainable behavior among employees.

4.4 Green Compensation and Rewards

Green compensation systems provide incentives for environmentally responsible behavior. Employees are rewarded for adopting eco-friendly practices such as reducing energy consumption, minimizing waste, and contributing to sustainability programs.

Both monetary and non-monetary rewards are used to motivate employees, thereby strengthening their commitment to environmental goals.

4.5 Green Employee Engagement

Green employee engagement involves encouraging active participation in environmental initiatives. Organizations promote activities such as tree plantation drives, recycling campaigns, and sustainability awareness programs.

These initiatives foster a sense of collective responsibility and enhance employee involvement in organizational sustainability efforts.

Synthesis of Practices

Empirical evidence indicates that Chennai-based organizations are progressively adopting these GHRM practices in an integrated manner. Rather than functioning as isolated initiatives, these practices collectively contribute to shaping employee behavior and improving environmental performance.

5. Impact of Green HRM on Environmental Sustainability

The implementation of GHRM practices has significant implications for environmental sustainability at both individual and organizational levels.

5.1 Improved Employee Environmental Behavior

GHRM practices influence employees' attitudes and behaviors by promoting environmental awareness and responsibility. Employees are more likely to engage in eco-friendly practices such as reducing energy usage, minimizing waste, and supporting sustainability initiatives.

5.2 Enhanced Organizational Culture

The consistent application of GHRM practices leads to the development of a sustainability-oriented organizational culture. Shared values, norms, and beliefs related to environmental responsibility become embedded within the organization.

This cultural transformation strengthens employee commitment and enhances organizational reputation.

5.3 Improved Environmental Performance

Organizations adopting GHRM practices achieve measurable improvements in environmental performance, including efficient resource utilization, reduced waste generation, and lower environmental impact.

Empirical studies consistently demonstrate a positive relationship between GHRM practices and environmental performance outcomes.

5.4 Competitive Advantage

GHRM practices contribute to organizational competitiveness by enhancing brand image and attracting environmentally conscious stakeholders. Organizations that demonstrate commitment to sustainability gain a strategic advantage in the market.

6. Challenges in Implementing Green HRM

Despite its benefits, the implementation of GHRM practices presents several challenges:

- Limited awareness and understanding among employees
- High initial costs associated with implementation
- Resistance to change within traditional organizational structures
- Insufficient support from top management
- Difficulty in measuring sustainability outcomes and performance

These challenges highlight the need for strategic planning and leadership commitment in implementing GHRM practices effectively.

7. Opportunities for Chennai Organizations

Chennai provides a favorable environment for the adoption of GHRM practices due to several factors:

- Rapid growth of IT and industrial sectors
- Increasing awareness of environmental sustainability
- Government policies promoting eco-friendly practices
- Availability of a skilled and educated workforce

Organizations can leverage these opportunities to integrate sustainability into their HR strategies and achieve long-term environmental goals.

8. Findings and Discussion

The analysis of secondary data provides several important insights:

- Green HRM practices have a strong positive impact on employee environmental behavior
- Organizational culture acts as a critical mediating factor in achieving sustainability outcomes
- Training and development emerge as the most influential GHRM practices
- Organizations implementing GHRM demonstrate improved environmental performance and higher employee engagement

“The findings further indicate that the integration of multiple Green HRM practices produces a stronger impact on sustainability outcomes compared to isolated implementation.”

9. Conclusion

Environmental sustainability has emerged as a strategic priority for contemporary organizations, and Human Resource Management plays a central role in facilitating this transition. The present study highlights that Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices serve as an effective mechanism for aligning employee behavior with organizational sustainability objectives.

In the context of Chennai, particularly within the rapidly expanding IT and industrial sectors, organizations are increasingly integrating green HR practices such as eco-friendly recruitment, environmental training, performance management, and reward systems into their operational frameworks. These practices not only promote environmentally responsible behavior among employees but also contribute to the development of a sustainability-oriented organizational culture.

The findings of the study indicate that GHRM practices significantly enhance environmental performance through improved resource efficiency, reduced waste, and lower ecological impact. Furthermore, the role of employee environmental behavior and organizational culture emerges as critical in translating HR initiatives into tangible sustainability outcomes.

Overall, the study concludes that GHRM is not merely an operational approach but a strategic tool that strengthens organizational sustainability, enhances employee engagement, and contributes to long-term competitive advantage. The proposed framework provides valuable insights for organizations seeking to embed sustainability into their HR strategies, particularly in emerging urban economies such as Chennai.

10. Recommendations

Organizations should adopt a strategic approach by integrating environmental sustainability into their core human resource policies and practices. This includes embedding green objectives in recruitment, training, performance management, and reward systems. Continuous environmental training and development programs are essential to enhance employees' awareness, knowledge, and competencies related to sustainability. Additionally, organizations should design effective incentive mechanisms to encourage and reinforce eco-friendly behavior among employees. Active involvement and commitment from top management are crucial for successfully implementing green initiatives and fostering a sustainability-oriented organizational culture. Furthermore, organizations should develop and implement appropriate metrics and evaluation systems to measure environmental performance, ensuring accountability and continuous improvement in sustainability outcomes.

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