

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM): A Strategic Approach to Sustainability and Employee Engagement

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Abstract

In light of the rapid environmental changes and global pressures to achieve sustainable development, the concept of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has emerged as a strategic tool to enhance organizational performance and achieve environmental and social goals. This study aims to analyze the relationship between GHRM practices on one hand, and the level of employee engagement and the achievement of institutional sustainability on the other. A descriptive quantitative approach was used, through developing a questionnaire distributed to a sample of employees in industrial and commercial institutions, and the data were analyzed using advanced statistical techniques such as SPSS, regression analysis, and Pearson correlation coefficient.

The results showed that the level of application of GHRM practices in the Iraqi institutions under study was relatively high, particularly in the areas of environmental training and motivation. It was also found that there is a strong positive statistically significant relationship between the adoption of GHRM practices and the increase in employee engagement in environmental activities, in addition to a direct positive impact of GHRM on institutional sustainability indicators (environmental, economic, social).

The study concluded that GHRM is not limited to being a contemporary managerial approach, but rather it is a tool for organizational change and individual motivation, and institutions should adopt it as part of their sustainable strategies. The study recommended the necessity of integrating the environmental dimension into all human resource activities and developing an organizational culture that encourages innovation and environmental responsibility in the Arab work environment.

Keywords: *Green Human Resource Management; institutional sustainability; employee engagement; environmental training; green motivation; environmental management; GHRM.*

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Introduction

In light of the rapid environmental transformations, institutions face a challenge in achieving a balance between economic performance and sustainability. Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has emerged as one of the modern trends aimed at integrating environmental considerations into human resource practices, not only as part of

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corporate responsibility but also as a strategic tool to enhance employee engagement and achieve sustainability goals. Therefore, this research seeks to:

- Highlight the environmental changes and sustainability pressures facing institutions.
- Clarify the role of green human resources in achieving sustainability goals.
- Link the concept of GHRM with employee engagement and motivation in environmental policies.

1.2 Research Problem

Despite the growing trend towards Green Human Resource Management, there is still ambiguity regarding:

- How does GHRM contribute to enhancing employee engagement?
- What is the relationship between GHRM policies and the sustainability of organizational performance?

1.3 Research Objectives

This research aims to:

- Clarify the concept of Green Human Resource Management and its dimensions.
- Measure the impact of implementing GHRM practices on employee engagement.
- Analyze the relationship between GHRM and institutional sustainability.
- Provide strategic recommendations to activate GHRM in the Arab work environment.

1.4 Research Importance

This research is of great importance from several aspects. Academically, it makes a good contribution to enriching modern studies in the field of GHRM. Practically, it helps provide a distinguished model for implementing green practices that enhance job engagement and sustainability. Institutionally, it is viewed with high positivity as it contributes to strengthening and building an effective environmental and organizational culture.

1.5 Proposed Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses were formulated as follows:

- H1: There is a positive relationship between the implementation of GHRM and the level of employee engagement.
- H2: GHRM practices positively affect the sustainability of organizational performance.
- H3: The impact of GHRM varies according to institutional characteristics (size, sector, organizational culture).

1.6 Research Methodology (Methodology)

The researchers in this study relied on the descriptive, analytical, and applied approach in analyzing the data collected through a closed-ended questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. It was distributed to employees of

institutions in various sectors, including environmental, industrial, educational, and others. The sample was selected using a simple random sampling method according to the applicable context, and descriptive analysis tools were used through regression measurement and correlation testing using the SPSS program.

1.7 Main Variables:

The main variables of the research were identified and are shown in the following table

Table 1. Main variables of the research

S	Type	Variables
1.	Independent	Green recruitment, training, evaluation, motivation, participation (GHRM)
2.	Dependent	Employee engagement – institutional sustainability indicators
3.	Mediator	Organizational culture, type, size, sector

Source: Prepared by the researchers, 2025.

2. Theoretical Framework and Previous Studies.

2.1 The Concept of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM)

Human resource management practices have recently gained significant attention as they help organizations integrate environmental goals into their HR strategies to align with broader company objectives .[Abdelhakim: 2024:36]. Human resource management refers to HR management activities designed to promote positive environmental outcomes .[Aboramadan: 2022:17]. These practices involve incorporating sustainability principles into recruitment and selection processes, providing green training programs, raising awareness of environmental responsibility, evaluating employees' environmental behaviors during performance appraisals, and linking these behaviors to reward systems. By fostering environmental competencies, HRM motivates employees to actively participate in the organization's green initiatives .[Alfadel: 2025].

The concept of Green Human Resource Management calls for integrating environmental and sustainability goals within HR activities, including recruitment, training, evaluation, and motivation. This approach aims to improve the organization's environmental performance by enhancing employee awareness and participation in green practices.

Renwick et al. (2013) defined it as a set of HR policies and practices that contribute to organizing and improving effective environmental management and achieving sustainability within the organization. .[Molina et al: 2021:48]

It is a concept that focuses on the sustainable development of the organization and the harmonious combination of the interests of employees, employers, and society as a whole, where it is not limited to the effective use of human resources to achieve company goals, but also includes caring for their well-being, development, and environmental impact. .[Gomes et al: 2023:2190]

Green Human Resource Management is also considered a strategic approach aimed at creating a sustainable and attractive work environment that enhances employee engagement and increases the overall effectiveness of the organization. This approach integrates sustainable development principles into management processes, with attention to social and environmental aspects as well as economic outcomes. .[Sibhatu et al: 2025:28]

2.2 The Main Dimensions of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM)

Green Human Resource Management consists of a set of dimensions that may contribute to achieving the goals of improving environmental performance and institutional sustainability by relying on some employee-related dimensions, which can be illustrated in the following table: .[Esen & Caliskan: 2019:60]

Table 2. The Main Dimensions of GHRM

Dimension	Interpretation
Green recruitment	Attracting and selecting environmentally oriented individuals according to sustainability criteria.
Green training	Designing training programs that enhance sustainable work behaviors and environmental awareness.
Green evaluation	Including environmental performance in employee evaluations.
Green motivation	Providing rewards for environmental initiatives and participation in reducing waste and resource consumption.
Employee participation	Engaging individuals in decisions and activities that support the transition towards sustainability.

Source: Prepared by the researchers, 2025.

2.3 The Concept of Institutional Sustainability.

Institutional sustainability (or sustainable business development) is the concept under which institutions must define their work plans and build their operations, taking into account economic indicators, as well as the social and environmental consequences of their decisions. The goal of corporate sustainability is to create long-term value for the company and society, recognizing the interdependence of their interests. .[Gupta & Jangra: 2023]

The concept of institutional sustainability refers to the organization's ability to continue achieving its economic goals while considering environmental and social aspects. It includes three dimensions: .[Paille et al: 2014:548]

The economic aspect: Sustainable business development involves the efficient use of resources, innovation, creation of new markets and products, as well as increasing the company's competitiveness. .[Amrutha & Geetha: 2014:6]

The social aspect: Organizations must care about the well-being of their employees, customers, suppliers, and the local community. This includes respecting labor rights, ensuring workplace safety, supporting social projects, and participating in public life. .[Del Brío et al: 2007:512]

The environmental aspect: Companies must strive to reduce their negative impact on the environment, introduce environmentally friendly technologies, reduce emissions and waste, and use natural resources efficiently.

2.4 Employee Engagement in Environmental Work.

It refers to the extent to which employees are willing to participate in environmental initiatives and policies, through voluntary behaviors or commitment to environmental procedures, and it is a critical measure for the success of GHRM. To engage employees in environmental protection, it is necessary to conduct training, set goals, encourage initiatives, create opportunities for participation in environmental events, and ensure information transparency. .[Sheikh et al: 2019:264]

2.5 Related Theoretical Models

- Human Capital Theory: Emphasizes that investing in employees through environmental training and motivation enhances organizational performance.
- Organizational Commitment Theory: Indicates that employees engaged in sustainability feel greater loyalty toward the organization.
- Triple Bottom Line Model: Integrates economic, social, and environmental performance in evaluating organizational effectiveness.

2.6 Previous Studies

We will review the most important studies and research related to our study topic, providing a comparative and brief analysis as shown in the following table:

Table 3. Overview of Previous Studies

S	Researchers	Year of Study	Study Topic	Key Findings
1	Jabbour & Santos	2008	Human Resources and Sustainability in Brazilian Industrial Institutions.	Environmental training and evaluation stimulate innovation and expand employee responsibility.
2	Renwick et al.	2013	Review of GHRM in the Industrial Sector.	Linking GHRM to improved environmental performance and strengthening a culture of responsibility.
3	Dumont et al.	2017	The Impact of GHRM on Employee Engagement in Canada.	Adopting GHRM policies enhances employee participation in sustainability.
4	Islam et al.	2021	The Effect of GHRM on Environmental Performance in Bangladesh.	There is a positive relationship between GHRM, environmental performance, and a sense of belonging.
5	Graham et al.	2023	Study of the Impact of Employee Participation in Supporting the Implementation of Green Supply Chain Management Practices: A Green HRM Perspective.	Our findings show that employee participation plays an important role in supporting the implementation of most global quality management practices.
6	Sibhatu et al	2025	Effects of Green Human Resource Management Practices on Organizational Sustainability Mediated by Employee Participation: Evidence from Ethiopian Manufacturing Industries.	The study results emphasize the critical role of green human resource management practices for sustainable manufacturing in the context of developing countries, especially Ethiopia. This study provides valuable insights and a new approach for senior managers and HR specialists in manufacturing industries in developing countries.

S	Researchers	Year of Study	Study Topic	Key Findings
7	Alfadel et al	2025	Enhancing Sustainable Development: The Role of Green Human Resource Management and Green Work Engagement.	This study investigates the relationship between green human resource management practices and the sustainable performance of small and medium industrial enterprises in Saudi Arabia, with a particular focus on the mediating role of green work engagement.

Source: Prepared by the researchers, 2025.

Based on the table above, we can conduct a comparative analysis of previous studies, which can be summarized in the following points:

- Most studies and research agree on the pivotal role that human resources can play in leading the transition towards sustainability.
- Many studies have focused on recruitment and training as primary tools.
- There is a key indication in the research of a real gap due to the scarcity of studies in Arab environments, particularly regarding the actual linkage of GHRM with employee engagement.

3. Research Methodology

In this section, the researchers seek to define and formulate the methodological steps that will be relied upon in designing the study (in terms of its type, data collection method, and statistical analysis tools used), in addition to describing the population, sample, and the sampling method.

3.1 Type of Research

This study is descriptive, analytical, and applied research, aiming to analyze the relationship between Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) and sustainability through employee engagement in order to identify and describe the phenomenon under study and classify its dimensions in the real institutional environment.

3.2 Research Method

The researcher used the quantitative approach by preparing and using a closed-ended questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale, due to the ability of this tool to collect quantitative data suitable for statistical and inferential analysis.

3.3 Research Population and Sample

- Research Population: Employees working in industrial and commercial institutions with an environmental orientation or committed to sustainability principles (public or private sector).
- Sample Size: A sample of (N = 120) individuals was selected using a simple random sampling method.

- Distribution Method: Electronically and/or in paper form through human resource coordinators in the targeted institutions, as well as some workers, specialists, and influencers in the fields of environment and sustainability.

3.4 Data Collection Tools

A questionnaire was designed consisting of three main sections, based on several references, interviews, and discussions conducted with some employees and specialists in the fields of environment and sustainability. One section was dedicated to the general data of the sample covered by the study. The other sections included:

The first section focused on Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices, consisting of five items.

The second section concentrated on employee engagement in industrial, health, and environmental sectors through five questions included in the questionnaire.

Finally, the institutional sustainability section was also prepared with five items.

The questionnaire responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale, as detailed in the table below.

Table (4) Five-Point Likert Scale

Likert scale	Response	Weighted Average	General Direction
1	Strongly Disagree	From 1.00 to 1.79	Strongly Disagree
2	Disagree	From 1.80 to 2.59	Disagree
3	Neutral	From 2.60 to 3.39	Neutral
4	Agree	From 3.40 to 4.19	Agree
5	Strongly Agree	From 4.20 to 5.00	Strongly Agree

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the literature.

3.5 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument

- Content Validity: The questionnaire was presented to a panel of experts in Business Administration and Human Resources.

- Reliability: Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated for all three sections, exceeding the scientifically acceptable values ($\alpha \geq 0.70$).

3.6 Statistical Methods Used

- Descriptive analysis (mean – standard deviation).
- One-sample and independent samples T-tests.
- ANOVA test for differences between demographic groups.
- Pearson correlation coefficient test.

- Multiple linear regression analysis to measure the effect of GHRM on employee engagement.
- Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) test if a sufficient sample size is available.

The research relied on appropriate quantitative analysis tools and rigorous methodological procedures to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the results, providing a solid foundation for testing the proposed hypotheses.

4. Analysis and Discussion

In this section, the researchers will present and analyze the results obtained from the data collected through the questions included in the questionnaire distributed to the sample individuals. The analysis will rely on appropriate statistical tools that assist in testing the research hypotheses and linking the results to previous studies and the theoretical framework.

4.1 Descriptive and Statistical Analysis of the Main Sections

Demographic Sample: Figure (1) shows that the percentage of male participants in the questionnaire was higher than females, reaching 64% compared to 36%. Regarding age groups, participation was close between the two groups (26-35 and 36-45), with percentages of 38% and 31%, respectively. The lowest participation was for the age group under 25 years, accounting for 12%.

Regarding years of service, the largest participation was concentrated in two groups: the first from 11 to 15 years, at 38%, and the second from 6 to 10 years and above, at 27%.

Regarding educational qualifications, holders of postgraduate degrees formed the smallest proportion in the sample at 20%, while the highest proportion was for bachelor's degree holders at 54%, followed by diploma holders at 26%.

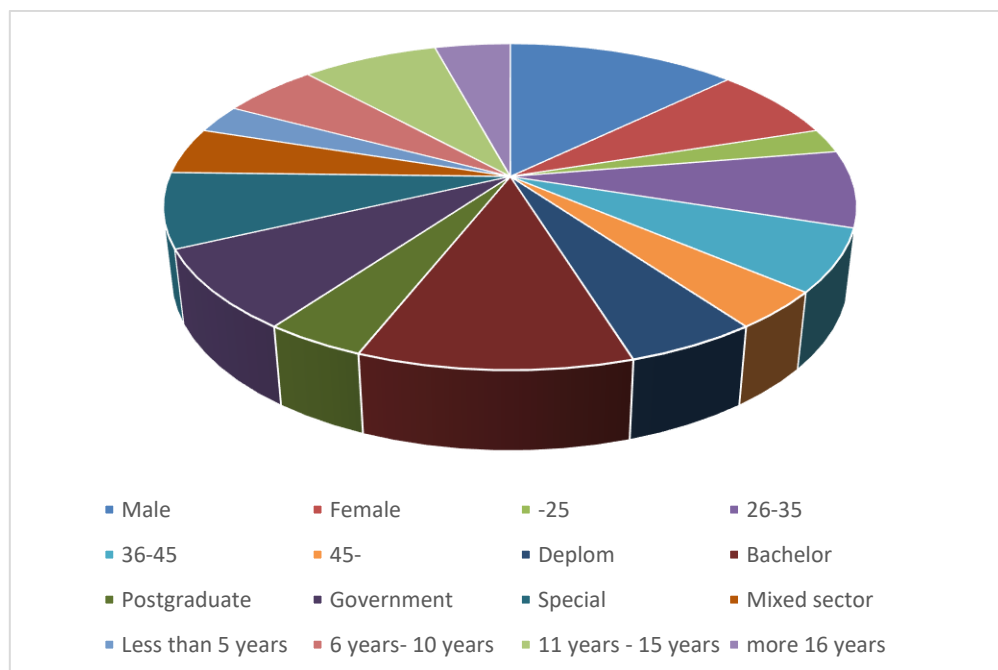


Figure (2) Demographic Sample

Source: Prepared by the researchers, 2025.

4.2 Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) Practices

The results showed that the overall mean for the GHRM axis was ($\bar{X} = 3.75$) with a standard deviation ($SD = 0.85$), indicating a high level of application of green practices in the institution, particularly in the areas of environmental training and sustainable motivation.

Table (5) Means of the GHRM Axis

S	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. 1	The institution relies on environmental criteria when recruiting and selecting candidates.	14.3	14.3	28.6	42.9		3.00	1.08
2.	The institution provides training programs on sustainability and environmental practices.	14.3	14.3	42.9	28.6		3.14	0.99
3.	Environmental performance is included in employee performance evaluations.	42.9	57.1				4.34	0.50
4.	The institution motivates employees to innovate in reducing resource consumption.	26.3%	63.2%	10.5%			3.86	0.84
5.	The institution supports employee participation in internal environmental initiatives.	42.9	28.6	28.6			4.41	0.84
6.	Weighted average	3.75						
7.	Standard deviation	0.85						

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the SPSS statistical program.

4.3 Employee Engagement

The data showed that the overall mean for the employee engagement axis was ($\bar{X} = 3.98$), which is a very high mean, indicating actual and genuine interaction between employees and environmental initiatives in the institution, with a standard deviation ($SD = 0.85$).

Table (6) Means of the Employee Engagement Axis

S	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	I feel that I am an active partner in achieving the institution's environmental goals.	28.6	57.1	14.3			4.14	0.64
2.	I regularly participate in meetings or activities related to sustainability.	28.6	28.6	14.3	14.3	14.3	3.43	1.41
3.	I provide ideas to reduce waste or energy consumption.	28.6	42.9	28.6			4.00	0.76
4.	The institution encourages me to take initiative on environmental issues.	14.3	71.4	14.3			4.00	0.54
5.	I feel satisfied with my contribution to the institution's environmental efforts.	28.6	71.4				4.29	0.46
6.	Weighted average	3.98						
7.	Standard deviation	0.76						

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the SPSS statistical program.

4.4 Institutional Sustainability

The results showed that the institution applies environmental and social sustainability concepts in a balanced manner, with a higher focus on environmental performance, with a mean of ($\bar{X} = 3.83$) and a standard deviation of ($SD = 0.75$).

Table (7) Means of the Institutional Sustainability Axis

S	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	The institution continuously seeks to reduce its environmental impacts.	14.3	85.7				4.14	0.35
2.	There are clear policies for waste management and energy saving.	28.6	42.9	28.6			4.00	0.76
3.	The institution cares about social responsibility alongside financial performance.	14.3	71.4	14.3			4.00	0.54
4.	Management encourages a culture of sustainable work at all levels.	28.6	28.6	42.9			3.86	0.84
5.	The institution's results reflect a balance between economic and environmental performance.	14.3	28.6	28.6	14.3	14.3	3.14	1.25
6.	Weighted average	3.83						
7.	Standard deviation	0.75						

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the SPSS statistical program.

Table (8) Regression Analysis Results

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Correlation Coefficient R	Coefficient of Determination R ²	ANOVA F-value	Sig F Significance	Unstandardized Beta B	t-value	Sig
GHRM	Employee Engagement	0.872	0.760	9.480	0.05	0.840	3.079	0.01
	Institutional Sustainability	0.181	0.033	0.101	0.771	0.109	2.542	0.02

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the SPSS statistical program.

Table (8) shows the results of the regression analysis to determine the effect of the independent variable Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) on the two dependent variables (Employee Engagement and Institutional Sustainability) using the multiple linear regression model.

The results indicate that the regression model is significant for Employee Engagement, with an F-value of (9.480) at a significance level of (0.05). However, it is not significant for Institutional Sustainability, with an F-value of (0.101) at a significance level of (0.771), which is higher than the significance level of (0.01).

The results also show that the independent variable explains 76% of the variance in Employee Engagement and 3% of the variance in Institutional Sustainability ($R^2 = 0.76$ and 0.03 respectively).

Considering the values under the Beta B column through the t-value and its associated significance, we conclude that for every one-unit improvement in the application of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM), there is an increase of (0.84) in employee engagement, while it contributes secondarily to improving institutional sustainability by (0.109).

4.5 Hypothesis Testing

- First Hypothesis: There is a positive relationship between the application of GHRM and employee engagement.

It was statistically confirmed ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.01$).

- Second Hypothesis: GHRM practices affect institutional sustainability.

It was confirmed through linear regression analysis ($R^2 = 0.66$), indicating that 66% of the variation in sustainability can be explained by GHRM.

- Third Hypothesis: The effect of GHRM varies according to institutional characteristics.

ANOVA results indicated statistically significant differences according to institution size ($F = 3.85$, $p < 0.05$), with larger institutions applying GHRM more efficiently.

4.6 Comparison with Previous Studies

- The results are consistent with Renwick et al. (2013), who found that GHRM contributes to enhancing environmental institutional performance.

- The findings also support Dumont et al. (2017), showing that employee engagement is positively influenced by GHRM policies.

- In the Arab context, these results represent a new scientific contribution due to the scarcity of applied studies in this field.

The results indicate a strong and statistically significant relationship between Green Human Resource Management and employee engagement, which enhances the institution's ability to achieve sustainability goals efficiently. Additionally, the size and sector nature of the institution affect the effectiveness of adopting GHRM practices.

5. Results and Recommendations

5.1 Results:

Based on the statistical analysis of the study data, the following results were reached:

1. The level of applying Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices in the sample institutions was relatively high, especially in the areas of environmental training and sustainability-related motivation.
2. The average employee evaluation of GHRM practices reached ($\bar{X} = 3.75$), indicating advanced managerial awareness toward sustainability.
3. Results showed that employees feel part of the institution's environmental vision, with 78% participating in internal green initiatives.
4. The employee engagement axis achieved a mean of ($\bar{X} = 3.98$), reflecting a good level of interaction and involvement in GHRM applications.
5. The results confirmed a direct positive effect of GHRM practices on the dimensions of institutional sustainability (environmental, economic, social).
6. Regression analysis showed that GHRM explains 66% of the variance in sustainability levels.
7. The first hypothesis was confirmed, showing a statistically significant positive relationship between GHRM and employee engagement. The second hypothesis was also confirmed, indicating that GHRM contributes to enhancing institutional sustainability efficiency. The third hypothesis was supported as well, showing that GHRM effectiveness varies according to the type and size of the institution.

5.2 Recommendations:

Based on the above results, the study recommends the following:

1. Integrate sustainability into HR policies: Institutions should adopt clear and declared policies that include environmental dimensions in recruitment, training, and evaluation.
2. Enhance employee engagement in environmental decision-making: Empower employees through participatory environmental initiatives and provide both material and moral incentives.
3. Allocate regular green training programs: Encourage the development of employees' environmental skills through specialized workshops.
4. Measure environmental performance within employee evaluation systems: Include eco-friendly indicators in institutional and individual performance evaluations.
5. Pay attention to small and medium enterprises: Provide technical support for applying GHRM practices in institutions structurally less capable of adopting sustainability practices.

6. Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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