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Green Human Resource Management and Organizational Sustainability

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Abstrak: Increasing environmental regulatory pressures, stakeholder demands, and global commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals have prompted organizations to integrate ecological dimensions into all management functions, including human resource management. Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has emerged as a strategic approach that aligns recruitment, training, performance appraisal, and reward systems with organizational sustainability goals. This article aims to conceptually examine how these practices contribute to organizational sustainability through a narrative thematic analysis of current literature, intentionally avoiding a systematic literature review. The study was conducted by identifying themes, synthesizing findings across studies, and then developing a conceptual framework linking green HR practices, employee green behavior, green organizational culture, sustainable leadership, and organizational environmental performance. The results show that these practices contribute to organizational sustainability through three main pathways: improving environmental performance, strengthening employee affective commitment, and creating green innovation. The article's novelty lies in the integration of the perspectives of human resource digitalization and environmental, social, and corporate governance into a conventional framework that has rarely been discussed in an integrated manner within a single model. Theoretical and practical implications and future research directions are also briefly discussed at the end of the article.

Keywords: green human resource management; organizational sustainability; environmental performance; employee green behavior; ESG governance



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INTRODUCTION

The last decade has witnessed a fundamental shift in how organizations view sustainability. While environmental issues were once considered solely the responsibility of production units, supply chains, or compliance departments, the human resource management discipline is now positioned as a strategic node determining the success of an organization's sustainability agenda. This shift is inextricably linked to the multidirectional pressures facing contemporary organizations: increasingly stringent environmental regulations, investor expectations for environmental, social, and governance (ESG) reporting, consumer preferences for environmentally friendly products and services, and countries' commitments to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. It is within this context that Environmentally Conscious Human Resource Management, better known as Green Human Resource Management (GHRM), is rapidly developing as both a field of study and a managerial practice.

Conceptually, GHRM can be understood as the integration of environmental values and objectives into the entire human resource management cycle, from green recruitment and selection, environmentally oriented training and development, performance appraisals incorporating ecological indicators, to compensation and reward systems that encourage pro-environmental behavior (Miah, Szabó-Szentgróti, & Walter, 2024; Verma, Sharma, & Mahendru, 2025). Tatasari and Yulfajar (2025) emphasized that the success of GHRM depends heavily on the extent to which the policy is formally documented and consistently communicated, rather than merely being mere normative rhetoric. Meanwhile, recent bibliometric studies and systematic reviews, for example by Lawter and Garnjost (2025), Gkikas and Salmon (2026), and Ahmad, Javed, Sharma, and Siddiqui (2025), consistently show a sharp increase in the volume of GHRM publications since 2019, with Sustainability, Journal of Cleaner

Production, and Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management as the most productive journals publishing on this theme.

This rapid growth in the literature, however, leaves several important gaps. First, most studies still focus on the direct relationship between GHRM practices and environmental performance or organizational sustainability performance, without adequately elucidating the psychological and social mechanisms that bridge the two. Amjad and colleagues (2021) demonstrated that environmental performance and employee performance act as important mediators, but affective mechanisms such as employee commitment to the organization's environmental goals remain underexplored. Nabi, Liu, and Fahim (2025) begin to fill this gap by highlighting the role of top management's affective commitment, but studies at the operational employee level remain relatively limited.

Second, most GHRM research is still focused on specific geographic contexts, particularly East Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia (Bindeeba, Tukamushaba, Bakashaba, & Atuhaire, 2025), so generalizing findings to organizational contexts in other developing countries, including Indonesia, needs to be done with caution. Ismael and Ismail (2025) through multilevel analysis emphasized that the effectiveness of GHRM is strongly influenced by the institutional context and local organizational culture, so that models developed in one context may not be directly applicable to other contexts.

Third, and this is a key starting point for the novelty of this article, most conventional GHRM frameworks have not explicitly integrated two recent developments that are currently mainstreaming organizational transformation: the digitalization of human resource functions and the strengthening of ESG governance as a more measurable sustainability reporting framework. Syahrudin (2026) introduced the concept of Digital Green



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Human Resource Management, highlighting how digital technologies, such as cloud-based human resource information systems, employee data analytics, and online learning platforms, can accelerate the diffusion of environmental values throughout an organization while reducing the administrative carbon footprint. On the other hand, Campos-García, Alonso-Muñoz, González-Sánchez, and Medina-Salgado (2023) emphasized the importance of bridging human resource practices with the 2030 Agenda, but integrative frameworks linking digitalization, ESG, and GHRM in a single, coherent conceptual model are still rare in the literature.

Fourth, the dimensions of green leadership and organizational culture are also receiving increasing attention, but are often studied separately from GHRM practices themselves. Hatipoğlu and Akduman (2025) found that sustainable leadership mediates the relationship between GHRM practices and organizational commitment, while Román-Niaves, Morandini, Antonini, and Pietrantonio (2025) through a scoping study based on the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) framework emphasized that a green psychological climate is an important prerequisite for GHRM practices to translate into consistent employee green behavior. Maheshwari, Kaur, and Renwick (2024) went further by proposing a green competing values framework that classifies green organizational culture into four types: green clan, green adhocracy, green market, and green hierarchy, as a diagnostic tool for organizations to map their dominant green culture.

Fifth, functional aspects of GHRM such as green recruitment, green training, and green innovation also show varying results across contexts. Jamil, Zaman, Kayikci, and Khan (2023) emphasized the crucial role of green recruitment as the first point of entry for environmental values into the organization, while Lin, Gu, Gillani, and Fahlevi (2024) highlighted green work-life balance and green innovation as important mediators of the

relationship between GHRM and employee retention and corporate sustainability performance. Zhao, Wang, Chen, Hu, and Zhu (2023) added the perspectives of organizational ambidexterity and responsible leadership as determining factors for the long-term success of GHRM implementation, while Qalati, Siddiqui, and Magni (2024) emphasized that senior management's sustainability commitment is a structural prerequisite for the effectiveness of all these practices.

Based on this gap mapping, this article offers novelty in three aspects. First, methodologically, this article deliberately avoids the systematic literature review approach that has dominated GHRM studies, and instead uses a narrative thematic analysis approach that allows for a more flexible and reflective synthesis across themes. Second, substantively, this article integrates three streams of literature that have developed relatively separately—namely, functional GHRM practices, the psychological mechanisms and culture of green organizations, and the development of digitalization and ESG governance—into a single conceptual framework that is coherent and applicable to the context of organizations in developing countries. Third, contextually, this article specifically highlights the relevance of this framework for organizations in Indonesia, which are simultaneously facing environmental regulatory pressures, investor demands for sustainability reporting, and the need to accelerate the digital transformation of human resources.

Theoretically, GHRM studies generally rely on three main, complementary lenses. The Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) theory explains how human resource practices build employees' capabilities, motivation, and opportunities to engage in both voluntary and formal pro-environmental behaviors (Román-Niaves et al., 2025). The Resource-Based View (RBV) positions green human capital as a strategic resource that is difficult for competitors to imitate, thus becoming the basis



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for sustainable competitive advantage (Tari & Nirmala, 2023). Meanwhile, stakeholder theory emphasizes that organizations need to respond to environmental expectations from various parties, including regulators, investors, consumers, and communities, through human resource policies aligned with sustainability values (Malik et al., 2021). These three lenses, although often used separately in the aforementioned literature, are actually complementary and can be combined to explain how practices, individual mechanisms, and external pressures collectively shape organizational sustainability.

The relevance of this study is further strengthened when linked to the organizational context in developing countries, including Indonesia. On the one hand, domestic and international environmental regulatory pressure continues to increase, marked, among other things, by mandatory sustainability reporting for issuers and large corporations. On the other hand, the rapid digital transformation of human resources is driving organizations to utilize personnel information systems, data analytics, and online learning platforms not only for administrative efficiency but also as a means of disseminating environmental values massively and consistently across all work units (Syahrudin, 2026; Philavong, 2026). This combination of regulatory pressure and digital acceleration makes the integration of GHRM, green organizational culture, and ESG governance an urgent need, not merely an academic discourse.

Taking into account the background, literature gaps, and theoretical foundations, this article is structured to answer the main questions of how environmentally conscious human resource management practices contribute to organizational sustainability, what mechanisms bridge the relationship, and how developments in digitalization and ESG governance can be integrated into the framework to strengthen its theoretical and practical relevance in the future, both at the

global level and in the context of organizations in Indonesia specifically.

METHOD

This article employs a descriptive qualitative approach based on library research with narrative thematic analysis techniques. This choice was made intentionally to distinguish the article from systematic literature reviews, which require standardized search protocols, rigid inclusion-exclusion criteria, and standardized assessment of the methodological quality of primary studies following guidelines such as PRISMA. The narrative thematic analysis approach provides more flexibility for researchers to synthesize cross-disciplinary findings, connect concepts developed in different literature streams, and develop new conceptual frameworks, without being tied to the quantitative reporting logic of meta-analyses.

The review process was conducted through four interrelated stages. The first stage involved searching and collecting sources, covering reputable indexed journal articles from 2021 to 2026, with an emphasis on the last five years of literature to adequately cover the latest developments in human resource digitalization and ESG governance. Sources were obtained from academic databases and citation indexing engines such as Google Scholar and Scopus, as well as from reputable journal publishers such as MDPI, Taylor and Francis, Elsevier, Springer, Emerald, and Wiley.

The second stage is in-depth reading and thematic coding, which is the process of identifying key concepts, findings, and arguments from each source, then grouping them into thematic categories relevant to the study's objectives. Five major themes that emerged from this process are: (1) functional GHRM practices such as recruitment, training, performance appraisal, and green compensation; (2) psychological and behavioral mechanisms, including employee green behavior and affective commitment; (3) organizational culture and green leadership; (4) green innovation and environmental



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performance; and (5) human resource digitalization and ESG governance as the current trend.

The third stage is thematic synthesis, the process of connecting the five themes into a coherent narrative, taking into account patterns of similarities, differences, and potential gaps between findings from various studies. At this stage, researchers also compare findings from developed and developing countries to assess the extent to which cross-context generalizations can be made responsibly.

The fourth stage is the development of a conceptual framework, which visualizes the synthesis results in a model that systematically illustrates the relationships between themes. This framework serves as a conceptual map that guides the discussion in the results and discussion sections and serves as the main conceptual contribution of this article. The flow of these four stages is presented in Figure 1.



Gambar 1. Alur Tahapan Analisis Tematik Naratif

Figure 1. Flow of the stages of narrative thematic analysis in this study

To maintain the credibility and traceability of the study, even without using the PRISMA protocol, the researchers applied several precautionary principles. First, priority was given to articles published in reputable, indexed journals with active digital object identifiers (DOIs), allowing them to be openly searched and verified through Google Scholar and official publisher databases. Second, the researchers explicitly noted the source of each claim and argument throughout the synthesis process, allowing each statement in the results and discussion sections to be traced back to its original source. Third, the researchers conducted thematic triangulation by comparing findings from quantitative studies or large-scale surveys, such as those by Malik and colleagues

(2021) and Amjad and colleagues (2021), with findings from conceptual and bibliometric studies, such as those by Gkikas and Salmon (2026) and Efranto, Sipayung, and Amrulloh (2025), to ensure that the resulting synthesis did not rely solely on a single primary study methodology.

It should be emphasized that this approach has limitations, particularly related to the researcher's subjectivity in determining themes and interpreting relationships between concepts, which differs from a more standardized systematic approach. However, these limitations are offset by the flexibility to generate a new conceptual framework that integrates previously separate streams of literature, as is the primary objective of this article

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the thematic coding and synthesis, the study identified five interrelated themes: (1) GHRM functional practices, which integrate environmental values through recruitment, training, performance appraisal, and compensation; (2) psychological mechanisms, which explain the internalization of green values through employee behavior and affective commitment; (3) green culture and leadership, which sustain and disseminate environmental values across the organization; (4) green innovation and environmental performance, which represent measurable intermediate outcomes; and (5) HR digitalization and ESG governance, which accelerate environmental value integration while strengthening transparency and accountability. Overall, these themes form a multi-layered causal framework in which GHRM practices initiate environmental integration, psychological mechanisms facilitate internalization, organizational culture and leadership sustain collective implementation, green innovation and environmental performance generate measurable outcomes, and digitalization and



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ESG governance function as cross-cutting accelerators and accountability mechanisms.

GHRM Functional Practices as a Foundation for Sustainability

The first consistent theme emerging across the reviewed literature is the central role of functional GHRM practices as a foundation for organizational sustainability. Green recruitment and selection serve as the first point of entry for environmental values into an organization, as it is at this stage that organizations can screen candidates for environmental awareness and competence from the outset (Jamil, Zaman, Kayikci, & Khan, 2023). Once employees are hired, green training and development serve to build capacity and ecological awareness in a sustainable manner, while performance assessments that incorporate environmental indicators ensure that employees' contributions to sustainability goals are formally recognized, rather than simply being an unquantifiable voluntary initiative (Miah, Szabó-Szentgróti, & Walter, 2024).

Green compensation and reward systems complement this suite of practices by providing tangible incentives for employees who consistently demonstrate pro-environmental behavior. Tatasari and Yulfajar (2025) emphasized that the effectiveness of the entire suite of practices is largely determined by the extent to which policies are documented in writing and transparently communicated to all employees, rather than remaining implicit policies understood only by top management. This finding aligns with the meta-analytic study by Bindeeba, Tukamushaba, Bakashaba, and Atuhaire (2025), which showed that consistent implementation across human resource functions, rather than the presence of one or two practices in isolation, most strongly predicts the success of green innovation and

the organization's overall environmental performance.

However, the effectiveness of these functional practices is not automatic. Amjad and colleagues (2021) showed that the relationship between GHRM practices and organizational sustainability is significantly mediated by environmental performance and employee performance, meaning organizations need to ensure that these practices actually change actual employee behavior on the ground, rather than simply being policy documents that are not consistently implemented. Malik, Mughal, Azam, Cao, Wan, Zhu, and Thurasamy (2021) added that organizational citizenship behavior towards the environment is a crucial link connecting corporate social responsibility, GHRM practices, and sustainability performance. Therefore, organizations need to actively foster this voluntary behavior through role modeling from leaders and targeted reward systems.

Psychological Mechanisms: Employee Green Behavior and Affective Commitment

The second theme focuses on the psychological mechanisms that bridge GHRM practices with organizational sustainability outcomes at the individual level. Employee green behaviors, both mandatory according to formal job descriptions and voluntary outside of formal requirements, repeatedly emerged as key mediators across the reviewed studies (Gkikas & Salmon, 2026). Román-Niaves, Morandini, Antonini, and Pietrantoni (2025), using a scoping study based on the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity framework, asserted that a green psychological climate, namely employees' shared perception that the organization genuinely supports and values pro-



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environmental behavior, is a crucial prerequisite for formal GHRM practices to translate into everyday behavior.

Nabi, Liu, and Fahim (2025) extended this discussion by highlighting the role of top management's affective commitment to environmental issues as a factor strengthening the relationship between GHRM and organizational sustainability. When top management demonstrates genuine affective commitment, rather than merely symbolic compliance with regulations, employees at the operational level are more likely to believe the organization's green initiatives are authentic and thus more motivated to engage voluntarily. This finding reinforces the argument that the success of GHRM is inextricably linked to supportive leadership and organizational culture, which is the focus of the next theme.

Organizational Culture and Green Leadership as Levers

The third theme highlights the role of organizational culture and leadership as levers that strengthen or weaken the impact of GHRM practices. Maheshwari, Kaur, and Renwick (2024) developed a framework of competing green values that identifies four types of green organizational cultures: green clan, which emphasizes collaboration and kinship; green adhocracy, which emphasizes innovation and experimentation; green market, which focuses on results and competition; and green hierarchy, which emphasizes structure and procedural compliance. This framework provides a practical diagnostic tool for organizations to identify their dominant green culture type and design GHRM interventions that align with these cultural characteristics.

Hatipoğlu and Akduman (2025) demonstrated that sustainable leadership mediates the relationship between GHRM practices and employee organizational commitment, based on a case study of an organization in Turkey. Leaders who consistently demonstrate sustainability-oriented behavior and decision-making are able to strengthen the internalization of environmental values by employees, thus making the impact of formal GHRM practices more significant. Zhao, Wang, Chen, Hu, and Zhu (2023) added the dimension of organizational ambidexterity, namely the organization's ability to simultaneously exploit existing green competencies and explore new green innovation opportunities, as a factor moderated by responsible leadership in determining the long-term success of GHRM.

Green Innovation and Environmental Performance as Intermediate Outcomes

The fourth theme examines green innovation and environmental performance as intermediate outcomes linking GHRM practices to overall organizational sustainability. Lin, Gu, Gillani, and Fahlevi (2024) found that green work-life balance and GHRM practices jointly influence corporate sustainability performance and employee retention, with green innovation and organizational culture acting as dual mediators. This finding is significant because it demonstrates that the impact of GHRM extends beyond environmental performance to broader human resource outcomes, such as retention and job satisfaction.

Qalati, Siddiqui, and Magni (2024) emphasized that senior management's sustainability commitment is a structural prerequisite for the effectiveness of GHRM practices in producing tangible environmental performance, because



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without the support of resources and authority from top management, green initiatives at the operational level tend to be sporadic and unsustainable. Tahir, Umer, Nauman, Abbass, and Song (2024) broadened the scope of the discussion by explicitly linking GHRM to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, emphasizing that organizational environmental performance at the micro level actually contributes to the global sustainability agenda at the macro level, so that GHRM cannot be viewed solely as an internal organizational policy, but also as a contribution to broader environmental governance.

Human Resources Digitalization and ESG Governance: The Cutting Edge

The fifth theme is the most recent and also the main point of novelty of this article. Syahrudin (2026) introduced the concept of Digital Green Human Resource Management, which asserts that the digital transformation of human resource functions, from cloud-based personnel information systems, employee data analytics, to online learning platforms, can accelerate the diffusion of environmental values throughout the organization while directly reducing paper consumption and administrative carbon footprint. Ahmad, Javed, Sharma, and Siddiqui (2025) using a natural language processing-based bibliometric approach showed that the terms green innovation and digitalization increasingly appear side by side in the current GHRM literature, indicating a convergence of the two streams.

Meanwhile, Campos-García, Alonso-Muñoz, González-Sánchez, and Medina-Salgado (2023) emphasized the importance of bridging human resource practices with the 2030 Agenda and the ESG reporting framework, so that the contribution of the human resource function

to organizational sustainability can be measured and reported transparently to external stakeholders, not only understood as an unverified internal practice. Gkikas and Salmon (2026) through bibliometric mapping emphasized that the integration of corporate social responsibility with environmental performance is increasingly strengthening in the recent literature, in line with the increasing demand for integrated ESG reporting.

Based on the synthesis of these five themes, this study proposes a conceptual framework that positions functional GHRM practices as the starting point, psychological mechanisms and green organizational culture as bridges at the individual and group levels, green innovation and environmental performance as intermediate outcomes, and human resource digitalization and ESG governance as accelerators and reporting frameworks that strengthen the entire system towards measurable and accountable organizational sustainability.

Compared to conventional GHRM frameworks, which tend to be linear, where GHRM practices directly impact environmental performance or sustainability performance (Amjad et al., 2021; Malik et al., 2021), the framework proposed in this study is more circular and layered. Digitalization and ESG governance are not positioned simply as additional variables, but as layers that penetrate and strengthen all other themes, from accelerating the dissemination of functional practices through digital platforms, strengthening the transparency of organizational culture through auditable reporting, to providing data that supports more precise and sustainable environmental performance measurement.

These findings have important practical implications for human resource practitioners and organizational



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policymakers. Organizations seeking to strengthen their sustainability through GHRM need to ensure consistent implementation across functions, rather than simply implementing one or two practices in isolation; foster a green psychological climate and authentic affective commitment among top management; develop a supportive organizational culture and leadership; and begin leveraging digital technology and ESG reporting frameworks as both accelerators and tools for public accountability. For organizations in Indonesia in particular, this integration is becoming increasingly relevant given the increasing sustainability reporting requirements and competitive pressures to demonstrate credible environmental commitments to investors and consumers.

However, this study also identifies a number of limitations and areas requiring further research, particularly regarding longitudinal empirical evidence on the effectiveness of integrating digitalization and ESG into GHRM practices, as well as comparative studies across sectors and countries, which are still very limited in the reviewed literature, as also emphasized by Gkikas and Salmon (2026) and Bindeeba, Tukamushaba, Bakashaba, and Atuhaire (2025).

Overall, the discussion in this section emphasizes that organizational sustainability is not the result of a single practice, but rather the product of a multi-layered interaction between formal policies, individual psychological mechanisms, collective culture, measurable intermediate outcomes, and digital infrastructure and reporting that support transparency. The conceptual framework resulting from this synthesis is expected to serve as an initial reference for researchers who wish to empirically test these relationships, as well as for human resource practitioners who

wish to design a roadmap for implementing GHRM more systematically and integratedly in their respective organizations, including in the context of public and private organizations in Indonesia that are transforming towards more sustainable business practices.

CONCLUSIONS

This article conceptually examines the role of environmentally conscious human resource management (HRM) in promoting organizational sustainability through a narrative thematic analysis approach of the current literature, without using a systematic review protocol. The synthesis results show that organizational sustainability is formed through the interaction of five main themes: functional GHRM practices, psychological mechanisms and green employee behavior, organizational culture and green leadership, green innovation and environmental performance as intermediate outcomes, and human resource digitalization and ESG governance as accelerators and accountability frameworks. These five themes do not stand alone, but rather form a mutually reinforcing system, so that the success of GHRM is highly dependent on consistent implementation across functions and across organizational levels.

The main novelty of this article lies in the integration of human resource digitalization and ESG governance perspectives into the conventional GHRM framework, which has tended to be linear and fragmented. The proposed conceptual framework offers a more holistic roadmap for organizations, particularly in developing countries like Indonesia, to design human resource strategies that align with sustainability goals and are transparently accountable to stakeholders.

Practically, organizations are advised to ensure explicit documentation and communication of GHRM policies, foster a green psychological climate and authentic affective commitment from top management, develop an organizational culture and leadership that supports sustainability, and utilize digital technology and ESG reporting frameworks as instruments of acceleration and



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accountability. For academics, this article recommends further empirical research, particularly longitudinal and comparative research across sectors and countries, to test the validity of the proposed conceptual framework and deepen understanding of the mechanisms for integrating digitalization and ESG into environmentally sound human resource management practices more comprehensively

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