



## The Role of Green Human Resource Management in Advancing Sustainable Development in Health Sector Institutions

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دور إدارة الموارد البشرية الخضراء في تعزيز التنمية المستدامة في مؤسسات القطاع الصحي

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### Abstract:

Sustainable development is the most important point of transformation that is seeking to be achieved at present, which requires a review of the policies and practices that govern it. Green human resource management works to stimulate environmental initiatives and increase its employees, promotes their commitment to the issue of sustainable development; the current research has come to highlight the role of applying green human resources management in achieving sustainable development in health sector institutions. The analytical descriptive approach for the research related data extracted from several sources of reading assisted the researcher in developing the results showing ideas for the research. One of the most prominent conclusions reached in the implementation of green human resources management could make great progress towards sustainable development in health sector institutions and improves the quality of health services provided and the environment to the future generations.

**Keywords:** Green Human Resource Management (GHRM), Sustainable Development, Environmental Sustainability in Human Resource (HR), Sustainability in Healthcare Management, Health Sector Institutions.

### الملخص

تُعد التنمية المستدامة من أهم نقاط التحول التي يسعى العالم إلى تحقيقها في الوقت الحالي وهذا يتطلب إعادة النظر في السياسات والممارسات التي تحكم هذه العملية، ولإن إدارة الموارد البشرية الخضراء تعمل على تشجيع المبادرات البيئية وزيادة وعي العاملين بها، مما يعزز التزامهم بقضايا التنمية المستدامة، وجاء هذا البحث من أجل التعرف على دور تطبيق إدارة الموارد البشرية الخضراء على تحقيق التنمية المستدامة في مؤسسات القطاع الصحي، واستفادت الباحثة من المنهج الوصفي التحليلي للمعطيات ذات الصلة بالبحث، التي تم الحصول عليها من مصادر متعددة تم الإطلاع عليها، لاستخلاص النتائج التي توضح الأفكار المطروحة في البحث؛ وكان من أبرز الاستنتاجات التي تم التوصل لها إن تطبيق إدارة الموارد البشرية الخضراء يمكن أن تحقق تقدماً كبيراً نحو التنمية المستدامة في مؤسسات القطاع الصحي، وتحسن من جودة الخدمات الصحية المقدمة والمحافظة على البيئة للأجيال القادمة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الموارد البشرية الخضراء، التنمية المستدامة، الاستدامة البيئية في الموارد البشرية، الاستدامة في إدارة الرعاية الصحية، مؤسسات القطاع الصحي.

### Introduction

The world is facing a growing development regarding environmental issues in organizations, until the concept of green orientation has become one of its concerns, adding to new modern concepts of management. One of these concepts is Green Human Resource Management, one of the important pillars of sustainable development. This

necessitates moving towards green practices in organizations to support their human resources. Green HRM extends beyond social responsibility, playing a vital role in addressing environmental issues and achieving sustainability for organizational resources. It is an environmentally-driven administrative approach that aims to integrate environmental objectives into all HR practices to become eco-friendly and address environmental problems through employee training on the requirements of implementing environmental safety laws. Additionally, Green HRM encourages efficient resource use within organizations and promotes sustainable environmental issues to enhance employee morale, enabling organizations to sustain and achieve their desired goals (Nusair et al., 2022).

Green jobs focus on reshaping economic activities to be more supportive of environmental sustainability, paving the way toward sustainable development. Hence, there arose the need to apply Green HRM as a response to international environmental initiatives, particularly after the expansion of business activities and their negative impacts especially in the healthcare sector leading to pollution and environmental degradation (Hassouza & Al-Qahtani, 2022).

### **Research Problem**

Sustainable development represents one of the critical turning points the world strives to achieve, requiring reconsideration of numerous aspects governing this process. This includes launching several initiatives aimed at sustainability, especially as healthcare institutions still face many obstacles preventing its achievement. Given that human resources are not merely a production element but a critical and effective contributor to developmental processes, it is imperative to precisely determine the role Green HRM plays in achieving sustainable development. This research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is meant by Green Human Resource Management?
2. What is sustainable development?
3. What is role of the implementation of green human resources management to achieve sustainable development in health sector institutions?

### **Research Objectives**

This research aims to:

- Understand Green HRM and sustainable development.
- Highlight the implications of Green HRM and its application mechanisms in healthcare institutions to achieve sustainable development.
- Provide evidence of the importance of green human resources in achieving sustainable development amidst the rapid global challenges of our time.

### **Research Importance**

The significance of this study stems from the developmental role played by the healthcare sector as a cornerstone in building a healthy individual capable of serving their community. It also emphasizes the importance of the researched variables, especially human resources, as a crucial component of developmental processes. The study highlights the importance of green human resources in optimally utilizing knowledge and skills for sustainable development. Additionally, individuals significantly contribute to either the advancement or regression of a nation.

### **Research Methodology**

Given the alignment between the research problem, objectives, and importance, and since the research is theoretically oriented, the researcher adopted a descriptive-analytical approach to data relevant to the study. This methodology facilitated deriving conclusions and ideas that clarify the implications of applying Green HRM for achieving sustainable development in healthcare institutions.

### **First: Conceptual Framework of the Research**

Recently, organizations globally have begun striving to develop and expand their strategies related to HR roles and functions toward sustainability. They are doing so through environmentally friendly projects and initiatives, transforming their human resources into green ones that, in turn, design and implement new organizational policies to promote and sustain resource usage (Deepika, 2016; Kartat, 2020). Green HRM plays a significant role in organizations, helping address environmental problems by training and equipping employees with the knowledge needed to implement environmental safety regulations.

Researchers such as (Margareta & Saragih, 2013; Sulich, 2019) confirm that Green HRM initiatives have become vital for many organizations, with the green concept emerging as a benchmark in organizational research.

## **The Concept of Green Human Resource Management**

The concept of green human resource management is one of the contemporary concepts in management thought that links human resource management activities with environmental management. The term green human resources are often used to refer to the engagement of human resources management policies and practices more broadly towards the environmental agenda of organizations in order to protect and conserve natural resources (Jabbour, 2013). It was also defined by (Mishra, et al, 2014) as “a set of practices that encourage green initiatives by increasing employees’ awareness and commitment to environmental sustainability issues.” Green human resource management also refers to the integration of the organization's environmental management with the objectives of human resource management practices such as recruitment, selection, training and development, performance management, evaluation and rewards (Nusair et al, 2022; Jackson et al, 2011).

Accordingly, green human resources management is concerned with developing policies and practices that promote environmental initiatives within organizations, by increasing employees’ awareness of the need to commit to sustainable environmental issues.

## **The Importance of Green Human Resource Management**

Researchers offering insights into GHRM emphasize that HR significantly contributes to building environmentally friendly organizations. This includes increasing employee engagement in environmental innovations, reducing environmental waste, enhancing operational efficiency, and minimizing costs (Norton et al., 2017). Furthermore, GHRM fosters the development of a sustainable organizational culture by adhering to rules and principles encouraging environmental protection among employees (Harmon et al., 2010). Through its policies and practices, GHRM can make employees more conscious of and concerned about natural resources (Vimala & Shriyanka, 2018).

The importance of GHRM extends beyond the organizational level to the individual level, impacting employees' personal and professional lives. Facilitating environmentally friendly behaviors in all aspects of life enables individuals to contribute significantly to their organization's environmental management success and to become responsible citizens committed to environmental sustainability (Nusair et al., 2022; Opatha, 2013).

## **Advantages of Green Human Resource Management**

GHRM plays a vital role in boosting employee morale, potentially maximizing benefits for both organizations and their employees. Several advantages can be achieved by implementing green HR practices, such as increasing employee retention rates, which contributes to attracting skilled and competent individuals. Additionally, it enhances the organization's image among its stakeholders and meets their needs, improving competitiveness and overall performance. GHRM also ensures sustainable returns, reduces the organization’s environmental impact, and aligns with emerging societal trends (Cherian & Jacob, 2012).

## **Practices of Green Human Resource Management**

A variety of practices can be implemented by GHRM as effective tools for protecting and sustaining the environment. Some of these practices include (Nusair et al., 2022):

### **1. Green Recruitment**

This function enables organizations to achieve sustainable development by attracting individuals interested in environmental management issues and selecting candidates with relevant environmental management experience. Integrating green consciousness into recruitment policies involves steps such as including sustainability-related questions in interviews (Bput, 2017). The pursuit of green recruitment practices, considered proactive and cost-effective, incorporates environmental policies and strategies in hiring. These practices aim to select candidates with advanced personal traits, creative behaviors, and innovative ideas aligned with environmental sustainability (Mandip, 2012). Green recruitment minimizes paper usage by utilizing online application forms and conducting virtual or telephonic interviews, reducing paper and fuel consumption. Such practices decrease environmental degradation and ensure new hires fully understand the organization’s environmental values and culture (Bangwal & Tiwari, 2015).

### **2. Green Training and Development**

Green training focuses on increasing awareness, developing skills, and changing employee behaviors to foster a more sustainable society through continuous improvement in training quality. Environmental training, essential for inspiring participation in environmental initiatives, equips employees with the latest knowledge to enhance performance and address workplace challenges more effectively (Jabbar & Abid, 2015). Training and learning processes should include programs, workshops, seminars, courses, and presentations to help employees acquire knowledge in green management. Training content must be designed to enhance the necessary skills and competencies. Online training modules and tools can minimize travel needs, and green training focuses on areas

such as safety, waste management, and recycling to promote sustainable practices at work (Hosain & Rahman, 2016).

### **3. Green Performance Evaluation**

GHRM must incorporate environmental indicators into performance evaluations and provide regular feedback to employees on their environmental goal achievements. Such feedback enhances employee knowledge and skills and facilitates discussions on their progress toward environmental goals, encouraging continuous improvement (Masri, 2016). Green performance evaluation emphasizes environmental awareness through two primary areas: environmental performance and competitive advantage. Green organizations may implement policies such as written environmental guidelines, environmental management systems, and setting goals to improve environmental performance. Metrics include pollution emissions, environmental performance, environmental work efficiency, and organizational environmental reputation (Mirghafoori et al., 2017).

### **4. Green Compensation and Rewards**

Green compensation includes wages, bonuses, and non-monetary rewards for employees knowledgeable and committed to environmental regulations. Incentives may include attending green events, paid leaves, gifts, and daily commendations, encouraging error-free work and environmental initiatives (Renwick et al., 2012). Compensation systems are critical for retaining, attracting, and motivating employees, enabling organizations to achieve their goals. Organizations offering green rewards found employees more inclined toward sustainable practices, and individuals demonstrated higher commitment to environmental responsibilities and skill acquisition when provided with green-related compensation (Bangwal & Tiwari, 2015).

### **5. Green Health and Safety Management**

A comprehensive approach to employee well-being at work involves measures to protect against physical injuries, as workplace incidents can cause significant economic losses due to reduced productivity and diminished work capacity (Jilcha & Kitaw, 2016). To ensure a healthy work environment and enhance employee morale, organizations should create green spaces with trees and plants, prohibit smoking in buildings and offices, and provide natural fruits and vegetables during HR meetings. These practices foster a safe and healthy work environment, enhancing employee well-being (Hosain & Rahman, 2016).

Green construction aims to incorporate sustainable practices in design and construction to minimize environmental impact, create healthy and comfortable spaces, and economically empower employees. Green buildings involve processes, institutions, and individuals implementing sustainable practices, identifying opportunities for continuous improvement, and deploying tools that provide a safe working environment (Pyke et al., 2010).

### **6. Green Engagement**

Green engagement is a key application of environmental practices and green human resource management. It aims to provide employees with opportunities to connect with environmental management, encompassing participation, a culture of support, and tacit knowledge. These elements encourage and motivate employees to commit to environmental management within the organization.

Several measures of green engagement include a clear green vision that reflects the values and symbols supporting environmental management, guiding employees to engage in environmental issues. Encouraging green engagement can also motivate employees to participate in environmental management through green activities such as offering opportunities to participate in problem-solving related to improving environmental issues in production processes (Tang et al., 2018).

### **7. Energy Conservation**

Energy conservation refers to behaviors that minimize energy consumption to preserve the environment, reduce fuel expenses, and enhance individual and community responsibility towards efficient energy use. The use of technology enables the same level of energy services while consuming less energy (Yusoff, 2015).

Energy conservation has a direct impact on environmental protection. Around the world, there are numerous calls to turn off air conditioning systems and lights before leaving workplaces. Some offices have implemented practices like monitoring carbon emissions from shared transportation vehicles (Deka, 2016).

Human resources professionals note that the best practices among organizations involve encouraging employees to adopt eco-friendly behaviors at work. Activities include double-sided printing, programming computers to enter sleep mode after a few minutes of inactivity, using energy-efficient desk lamps, and lowering blinds in office windows during summer to conserve energy. These practices positively impact the environment (Jain, 2016).

The engagement in such activities, therefore, forms one of the green human resource management practices essential to sustaining the workplace environment specifically and the broader environment generally the practice

brings in cost reductions, productivity enhancement, and better working conditions for the employees, thus attracting talent and job seekers as well.

### **The Concept of Sustainable Development**

Sustainable development has garnered significant global attention due to its critical and continuous role in enabling communities to make radical improvements in their lives for a sustainable future (Nusair et al., 2021). This emerged as the world faced various human and environmental crises. Sustainable development has since spread across both developed and developing nations, with numerous conferences, summits, and events held to promote it.

One such milestone was the 1992 Earth Summit in Brazil that further gave way to "Agenda 21, a blueprint for global action on achieving sustainable development," and the creation of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development. It is the new evolution of development thinking; it actually covers the deficit of previous developmental thoughts: for instance, the interrelationship between environment and development (Nusair & Muqadi, 2021). The Brundtland Report by the World Commission on Environment and Development defined, in 1987, sustainable development as a "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (OECD, 2001). This illustrates the continuous and progressive nature of the concept of sustainable development through improving the quality of life equitably for present and future generations. Sustainable development characteristics

### **Sustainable Development Characteristics**

Sustainable development is based on meeting the basic needs and requirements of the poorest segments of society to reduce their exacerbation in the world. It also focuses on the development of spiritual and cultural aspects while maintaining the specificity of civilized societies, in addition to the overlap of qualitative and quantitative dimensions, their elements cannot be separated and their indicators cannot be measured, Sustainable development also has an international dimension related to the need for rich countries to intervene in order to develop poor countries, because they care about the fate and future of future generations, and also take into account the rights of both current and future generations to natural resources and not to deplete them. Because it is an integrated and interconnected process based on planning and coordination between economic development, environmental sustainability, justice and social development (Khairi & Ghanem, N. D).

### **Goals of Sustainable Development**

The philosophy of sustainable development maintains the view of balance in the satisfaction of basic needs between present and future generations and available resources. It maximizes the use of renewable natural resources and minimizes the use of non-renewable ones. Technologies with minimal environmental impact are used in a way that provides a high-quality, healthy, economically viable life for the present and future generations. It does include the planning to develop the renewable and non-renewable natural resources to achieve intergenerational equity. It emphasizes the efficient use of resources, prioritizing various applications, and fostering international and regional cooperation to address environmental challenges. Additionally, it supports finding cost-effective alternatives (Al-Zubaidi & Hamza, 2019).

### **Dimensions of sustainable development**

Sustainable development is built on three interdependent and complementary dimensions that function interactively:

#### **1. Social Dimension**

The social dimension focuses on the interconnectedness of humans and nature, improving individual well-being, access to essential health and education services, and ensuring safety and human rights. It promotes cultural diversity, inclusive participation, and equitable opportunities for current and future generations (Salhi, 2017).

The human, social and cultural dimension is the focus of sustainable development, as the development process in this aspect depends on giving every individual the opportunity to participate and prove himself. Therefore, it is necessary to achieve justice, equality and fairness among the various segments of society on the one hand, and on the other hand, to enable current and future generations alike to have equal opportunities in all aspects of life (Al-Janabi, 2017).

#### **2. Economic Dimension:**

Sustainable development transitions from growth-centric economies to stable economies that consume natural resources sustainably while protecting the environment (Rasmussen, 2011). It aims to maximize societal welfare, eliminate poverty, and rationally utilize natural resources. Advanced technologies play a critical role in optimizing natural resource use to accelerate production and meet growing population demands (Husseini, 2014).

### **3. Environmental Dimension**

This dimension aims to enhance human well-being by protecting raw materials used for personal needs and minimizing waste-related impacts. Environmental sustainability programs include raising awareness and reducing pollution. These practices help institutions achieve competitive advantages through cost reductions in economic operations (Kucukoglu & Pinar, 2016). This type of sustainability contributes to creating a beautiful and safe environment that seeks to reduce environmental impacts that play a role in moving towards sustainable development to find solutions to environmental problems. Therefore, organizations must reconsider procedures and policies related to managing and continuously improving environmental performance by implementing green human resources practices (Tooranloo et al, 2017).

Implementing sustainable development globally necessitates improving living conditions for all while conserving natural resources. Achieving this balance requires economic growth and global legal and economic system integration to ensure long-term development for all. It also involves preserving environmental resources for future generations, addressing environmental pollutants, and preventing resource overuse, ensuring equitable access to education, health services, clean water, and energy worldwide.

#### **Second: The Analytical Framework of the Study**

The Role of Green Human Resource Management in Advancing Sustainable Development in Health Sector Institutions

Green Human Resource Management is a modern concept aimed at integrating environmental management into HR processes. This encompasses activities that assist organizations in incorporating environmental plans into areas such as recruitment, selection, performance management, training and development, compensation, and rewards. Implementing green HRM practices contributes to environmental protection and sustainability by raising awareness about environmental issues among employees and fostering behaviors that conserve natural resources and minimize waste, including hazardous medical waste (Zoogah, 2011).

Therefore, applying GHRM mandates that healthcare institution employees be knowledgeable and aware of environmental concepts, contributing to creating a culture of awareness and commitment to sustainability. This is evident in suggestions and individual initiatives aimed at reducing waste or costs, formally included in job descriptions. Consequently, healthcare institutions need to attract and employ individuals aligned with this environmental orientation. Moreover, adherence to GHRM standards requires employees' sincere belief in its significance for achieving sustainable development (Nusair et al., 2022).

Green HRM aids developmental processes through digital recruitment practices, such as online applications and interviews via phone or the internet, to reduce paper, fuel consumption, and travel. Such practices significantly reduce environmental degradation and ensure environmental values and culture are communicated to job applicants, enhancing the appeal of healthcare institutions that adopt sustainability concepts (Das & Singha, 2016). Performance evaluation systems should include green goals as indicators of green behavior, crucial for maintaining discipline in environmental matters and encouraging behaviors aligned with these goals. Training programs aimed at raising employees' environmental awareness develop new technical and managerial competencies, vital for fostering environmental innovations. Furthermore, green rewards empower employees to make independent decisions about adopting eco-friendly practices, fostering a work environment supportive of sustainability (Parida & Brown, 2015).

#### **Third: Conclusions**

**Based on the above, the following conclusions can be drawn:**

1. The concept of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) is a contemporary administrative approach linking HR activities and policies to environmental management to conserve natural resources and prevent their unjustified depletion.
2. Sustainable development is widely used internationally as a key sustainability indicator. It represents an essential and ongoing process requiring focus on all sustainability aspects social, environmental, and economic and necessitates organized and coordinated contributions from all sectors and groups.
3. There is an increasing need for GHRM and improved sustainable resource utilization in healthcare institutions. Numerous environmentally responsible practices can be initiated by GHRM, such as reducing and recycling medical waste, training individuals on energy-saving practices using efficient lighting, and exploring opportunities for implementing alternative energy sources while conserving water by monitoring causes of waste in healthcare institutions.
4. The application of GHRM in healthcare institutions positively impacts their efficiency and effectiveness. Therefore, it is essential to encourage employees to adopt responsibility for environmental and sustainability issues, contributing to developing their skills and competencies.
5. Leveraging GHRM practices in healthcare institutions, especially in energy conservation and medical supplies, yields significant environmental benefits and cost savings.

6. Promoting GHRM among employees in healthcare institutions enhances their performance. Thus, their skills and knowledge should be developed to align with developmental process requirements through diverse training programs supported by objective and transparent reward and incentive systems to maintain sustainability.
7. Supporting GHRM practices in healthcare institutions entails granting HR specialists the authority and powers necessary to effectively implement developmental dimensions, focusing on improving recruitment processes and providing a safe work environment to reduce occupational accidents by enhancing physical conditions. This also includes utilizing modern communication tools, such as computers and the internet, to reduce reliance on paper-based processes in healthcare operations.
8. Employees in healthcare institutions should be encouraged to propose and execute creative ideas in GHRM through incentive systems that support the dissemination of such initiatives. This includes developing integrated information systems that enhance information exchange among healthcare institution employees, reducing transaction times and facilitating services for patients.

#### **Fourth: Recommendations**

In light of the above conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed to help healthcare institutions achieve significant progress toward sustainable development, improve the quality of healthcare services, and preserve the environment for future generations:

1. Develop Environmental Policies and Promote Green Orientation: Enhance environmental awareness among healthcare employees to empower them to protect the environment and conserve natural resources on an individual level while fostering an organizational culture capable of addressing challenges to sustainability and improving healthcare services.
2. Maintain Green HRM Practices: Continue applying GHRM practices for their positive impact on sustainable development and encourage innovation in creating sustainable healthcare products and services, such as eco-friendly medicines and medical equipment.
3. Conduct Awareness Programs: Develop electronic educational programs for healthcare employees to emphasize the importance of GHRM and its impact on the environment and sustainable development, along with raising awareness among patients about the harmful effects of smoking on workplace health and public health.
4. Introduce Green Incentives: Establish specialized systems for green compensation and rewards to encourage employees to use public transportation, reduce waste, and prioritize environmental care. Additionally, leverage modern technology to minimize energy and water consumption through smart energy management systems and eco-friendly medical equipment, while promoting recycling programs for medical and non-medical waste.
5. Facilitate Modern Communication: Enhance the use of modern communication technologies and information systems among Jordanian healthcare institutions for the benefit of both employees and patients.
6. Set Environmental Performance Metrics: Develop standards and indicators to measure the environmental performance of healthcare institutions and track progress periodically, ensuring continuous improvement toward green practices.
7. Encourage Further Research: Conduct more studies on GHRM practices and their impact on sustainable development in Arab countries.

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