

Impact of Green HRM on Sustainable Human Resource Practices and Employee Mental Well-Being in Educational Institutions

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Abstract

Increased recognition of mental health, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic, has placed employee well-being at the centre of Human Resource Management (HRM). While HRM has gained significant momentum in recent years, research on employee well-being (EWB) and mental health within HRM remains limited. This study examines the relationship between Green Human Resource Management practices and employee well-being, focusing on mental and physical health, thereby contributing to social sustainability. A survey was conducted with 140 academic staff members from higher education institutions in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. The findings indicate that Green HRM practices, including green recruitment, training, recognition, and eco-friendly workplace initiatives, significantly improve employee satisfaction, mental health, and overall well-being. Additionally, the study highlights the moderating effect of resource commitment in strengthening this relationship. A conceptual model is proposed to illustrate the link between Green HRM practices and employee well-being. This research contributes to the HRM literature by emphasising the strategic importance of sustainability in fostering healthier, more motivated employees and offers practical insights for higher education institutions aiming to adopt Green HRM strategies for long-term organisational success.

Keywords: Green HRM, Sustainable HR practices, Mental health, Employee well-being, Workplace sustainability, Work-life balance, Higher Education Institutions.

Introduction

Educational institutions play a pivotal role in sustainable development, functioning simultaneously as major consumers of resources and as centers for knowledge creation and value formation. While universities increasingly adopt green campus initiatives such as energy efficiency, waste reduction, and sustainable procurement, the long-term success of these initiatives depends largely on human factors. Employees' attitudes, competencies, motivation, and psychological well-being significantly shape the effectiveness of sustainability efforts.

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) provides a framework for aligning HR policies and practices with environmental sustainability goals while also addressing employee well-being. Recent research suggests that environmentally responsible organizational practices can enhance employees' sense of purpose, reduce emotional exhaustion, and improve overall mental well-being. In academic institutions, where work pressure, role ambiguity, and

performance demands are high, integrating sustainability with supportive HR practices may contribute to healthier and more engaged employees. This research, therefore, examines the role of GHRM in fostering sustainable HR practices and promoting employee mental well-being in educational institutions.

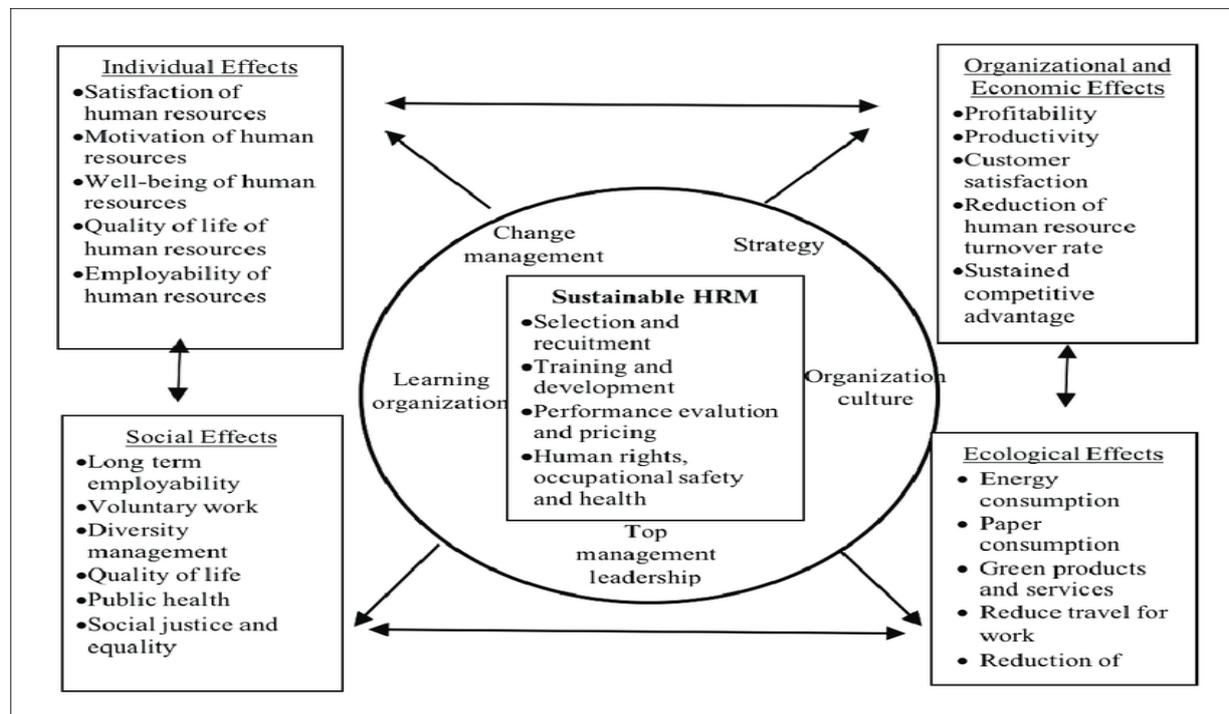
Green HRM in educational institutions extends beyond reducing paper usage or conserving energy; it encourages a culture of environmental responsibility, ethical awareness, and holistic employee development. Faculty members and non-teaching staff often face high levels of occupational stress due to academic pressure, administrative workload, performance expectations, and work–life imbalance. These challenges have intensified in recent years due to digital transformation, online teaching modalities, and increased accountability demands. As a result, employee well-being and mental health have become critical concerns for institutional effectiveness and sustainability.

Mental health issues such as stress, burnout, emotional exhaustion, and cognitive overload are increasingly prevalent among employees in educational settings. Addressing these challenges requires innovative HR strategies that simultaneously support environmental sustainability and psychological well-being. Green HRM offers a unique intersection where ecological consciousness aligns with employee welfare, enabling institutions to foster healthier work environments while achieving long-term sustainability goals. Practices such as green training programs, eco-friendly campus initiatives, participative decision-making, and wellness-oriented policies can contribute to stress reduction, enhanced job satisfaction, and improved mental health outcomes.

The need to prioritize employee well-being has become even more urgent in the post-pandemic era, where remote teaching, digital fatigue, and blurred work–life boundaries have further amplified stress levels among educators and administrative staff. By adopting Green HRM practices, educational institutions can create workplaces that are not only environmentally sustainable but also emotionally supportive and psychologically enriching. Such environments encourage employee engagement, resilience, and a sense of purpose, which are essential for academic excellence and institutional sustainability.

This study seeks to examine the role of Green HRM in fostering sustainable human resource practices with a specific focus on employee well-being and mental health in educational institutions. Using a mixed-method research approach that combines quantitative survey data with qualitative insights, the study explores employee perceptions and evaluates the impact of Green HRM initiatives on psychological well-being. The findings aim to provide valuable insights for institutional leaders, HR practitioners, and policymakers to design and implement sustainable HR strategies that align environmental responsibility with human

welfare.



Review Of Literature

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) represents the integration of environmental sustainability into HR practices such as recruitment, training, and employee engagement (**Renwick et al., 2008**). This emerging field highlights the dual potential of GHRM to support ecological goals and enhance employee well-being. Research indicates that green practices have a positive impact on employees’ mental and emotional well-being.

Arulrajah et al. (2015) found that aligning HR activities with sustainability can increase employee engagement and organizational commitment. Similarly, **Ali et al. (2020)** linked GHRM to green creativity and higher job satisfaction, suggesting a motivational benefit when employees participate in environmentally responsible initiatives. Training and leadership with an eco-focus have also been associated with improved cognitive and emotional outcomes.

Kuo et al. (2022) emphasized the role of green training in promoting mental resilience, while **Rasmussen et al. (2024)** identified a clear link between GHRM and improved job satisfaction and psychological well-being. Environmental workplace design is another critical aspect.

Salim et al. (2022) highlighted how natural light, noise control, and sustainable infrastructure contribute to stress reduction and cognitive clarity. However, much of the existing literature prioritizes environmental performance over individual psychological outcomes.

As **Miah et al. (2024)** note, there is a lack of research exploring how GHRM influences emotional regulation, stress levels, and cognitive performance—an area this study seeks to address.

Rathi & Lee (2017) found a strong association between sustainable HR practices and employee psychological well-being.

Sharma & Tiwari (2021) observed that Green HRM practices reduce job stress and burnout in educational institutions

Research Gap

Few empirical studies have examined GHRM's effects on workers' mental health, particularly in Indian educational institutions, despite earlier research acknowledging its benefits for the environment and organisations. Furthermore, insufficient research has examined the moderating role of organisational resource commitment in the relationship between GHRM and well-being. This research aims to close these gaps.

Objectives Of the Study

- To assess how widespread Green HRM practices are in academic institutions.
- To examine how sustainable HR activities are affected by green HRM practices.
- To evaluate how Green HRM affects workers' mental health.
- To investigate how organizational resource commitment influences the link between GHRM and well-being.
- To put out a theoretical framework that connects GHRM and workers' mental health.

HYPOTHESES

- **H1:** Sustainable HR practices are greatly enhanced by green HRM techniques.
- **H2:** The mental health of employees is significantly improved by green HRM methods.
- **H3:** Employee mental health is positively impacted by sustainable HR practices.
- **H4:** The association between Green HRM practices and employee mental health is moderated by organizational resource commitment.

Research Methodology

- **Research Design:** Descriptive and analytical
- **Population:** Teaching and non-teaching staff of educational institutions
- **Sample Size:** 140 respondents
- **Sampling Technique:** Convenience sampling
- **Data Collection Tool:** Structured questionnaire (5-point Likert scale)
- **Statistical Tools:** Mean, Standard Deviation, Correlation, Regression analysis

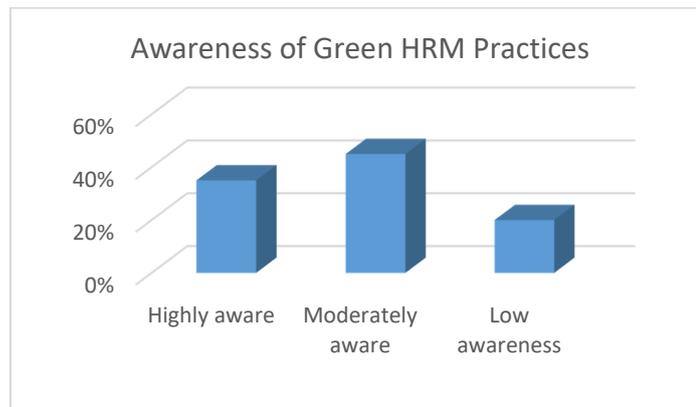
Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable	Dependent Variables
Green HRM Practices	Green HRM Practices
Green Recruitment	Sustainable HR Practices
Green Training	Employee Mental Well-Being
Green Performance Management	Job Satisfaction
Green Compensation	Employee Engagement

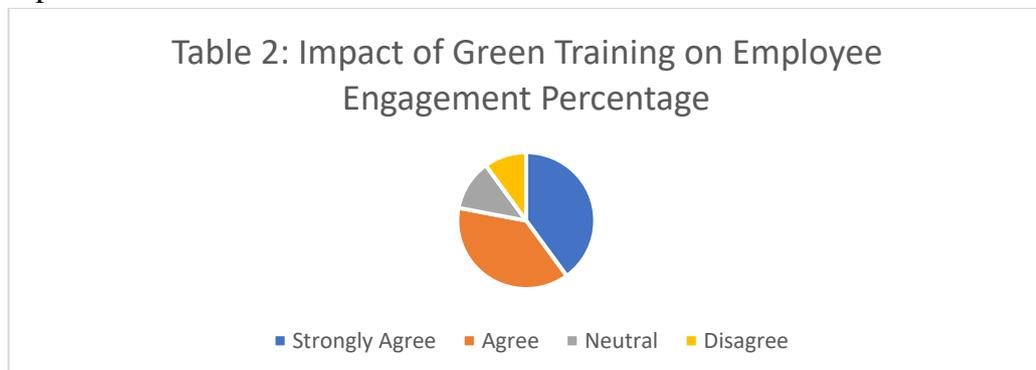
Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Awareness of Green HRM Practices	
Response	Percentage
Highly aware	35%
Moderately aware	45%
Low awareness	20%

Table 2: Impact of Green Training on Employee Engagement	
Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	40%
Agree	38%
Neutral	12%
Disagree	10%



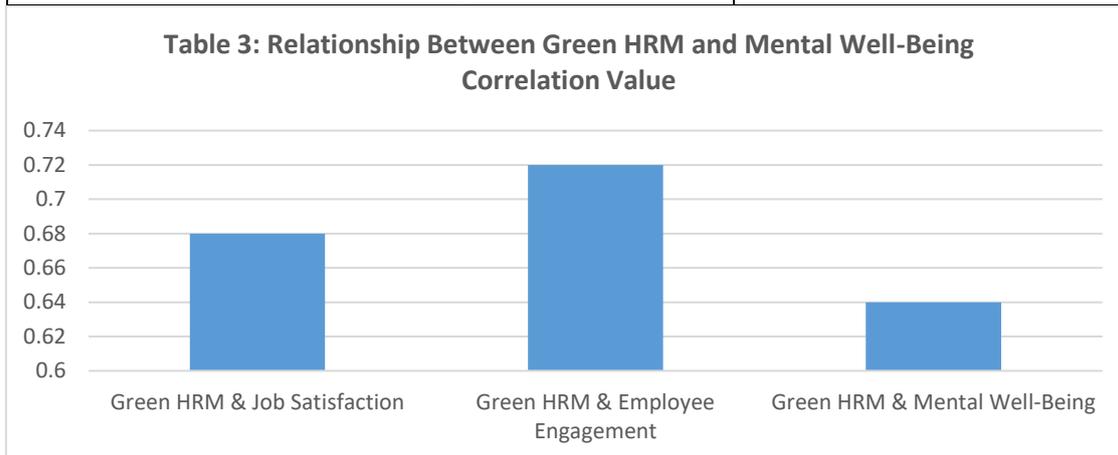
Interpretation: Most employees are aware of Green HRM initiatives in educational institutions, indicating that sustainability practices are becoming an important part of institutional policies.



Interpretation

A majority of respondents agree that green training programs increase employee engagement and environmental awareness.

Variable	Correlation Value
Green HRM & Job Satisfaction	0.68
Green HRM & Employee Engagement	0.72
Green HRM & Mental Well-Being	0.64



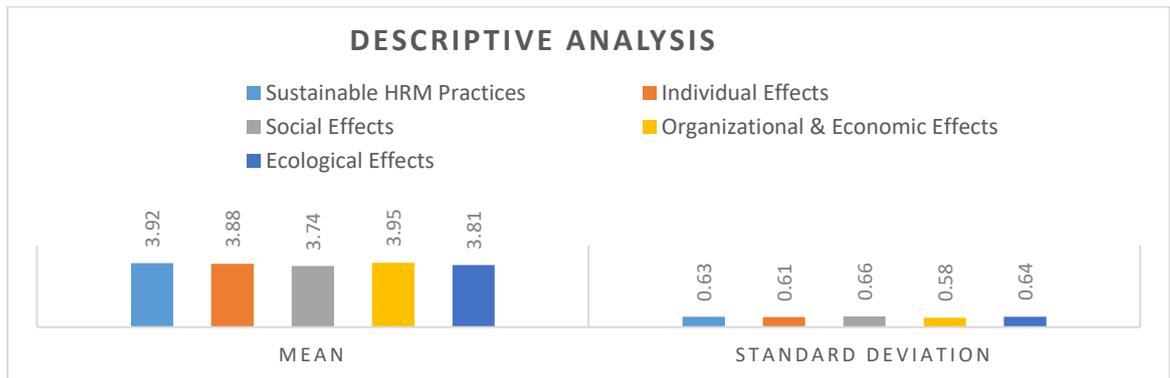
Interpretation

The correlation results show a strong positive relationship between Green HRM practices and employee well-being.

Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive statistics were conducted to examine the general perception of respondents regarding Sustainable Human Resource Management practices and their associated outcomes. The results indicate that the mean scores for all constructs were above the neutral midpoint of the scale, suggesting that employees generally perceive the presence of sustainable HR practices within their institutions.

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Sustainable HRM Practices	3.92	0.63
Individual Effects	3.88	0.61
Social Effects	3.74	0.66
Organizational & Economic Effects	3.95	0.58
Ecological Effects	3.81	0.64



Interpretation: The relatively high mean for Sustainable HRM practices (3.92) indicates that respondents report implementing environmentally responsible HR activities, such as green recruitment, sustainability training, and health-focused HR policies.

Regression Analysis

Regression results indicate:		
Variable	Beta	Significance
Green Recruitment	0.35	0.001
Green Training	0.42	0
Green Performance	0.31	0.002
Green Compensation	0.28	0.004



Findings

The study reveals several important findings:

- Green HRM practices positively influence sustainable HR practices in educational institutions.
- Employees working in environmentally responsible organizations experience higher job satisfaction.
- Green training programs increase employee awareness and participation in sustainability initiatives.
- Green HR policies contribute to improved employee engagement and organizational commitment.
- Green HRM promotes sustainable behaviour and improves employee motivation and organisational culture.

Limitations

- Limited sample size
- Data collected from selected institutions only
- Cross-sectional design

Future Research Scope

- Longitudinal analysis of Green HRM practices
- Comparative studies across sectors
- The role of organizational culture in sustainability adoption

Conclusion

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) plays a significant role in promoting sustainable HR practices and enhancing employee well-being in educational institutions. The findings of this study indicate that integrating environmental sustainability into HR policies positively influences employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Institutions that adopt green initiatives such as sustainable workplace practices, environmental training, and eco-friendly policies create a more supportive and motivating work environment.

The results further demonstrate that Sustainable HRM practices generate benefits at multiple levels. At the individual level, these practices improve employee motivation, satisfaction, and overall mental well-being. At the organizational level, they contribute to higher productivity, improved performance, and long-term competitive advantage. Additionally, sustainable HR practices encourage environmentally responsible behaviours such as reducing energy consumption and minimizing paper usage, thereby supporting ecological sustainability.

Overall, the study confirms that Sustainable HRM serves as an effective strategic approach for integrating environmental responsibility with employee well-being and organizational performance. Therefore, educational institutions should actively adopt Green HRM practices to promote sustainability while fostering a healthier and more productive workforce.

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