

## Advancing Organizational Sustainability Through Green Hrm: The Mediating Roles of Green Innovation and Employee Environmental Performance

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices on organizational sustainable performance (OSP), emphasizing the mediating role of green innovation (GI) and employee green performance (EGP). Rooted in the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) theory and Social Identity Theory, the research investigates how key GHRM components green recruitment and selection (GRS), green training (GT), and green pay and reward (GPR) influence sustainability outcomes within Nepalese organizations. Drawing data from 200 respondents across diverse industries in Chitwan, Nepal, the study employed a positivist, deductive research approach with a cross-sectional survey design. Data analysis using SPSS revealed strong positive correlations between GHRM practices and OSP, with EGP emerging as the most significant predictor. Regression analysis confirmed that GPR and GI significantly contribute to OSP, while GT and GRS were found to be statistically insignificant. These findings underscore the importance of behavioral and innovation focused HR strategies in driving sustainability. The study contributes to the evolving discourse on GHRM by contextualizing global frameworks within a developing economy and offers practical implications for HR practitioners and policymakers. Future research is recommended to explore the roles of green transformational leadership, technology integration, and longitudinal effects of GHRM practices on sustainability.

**Keywords:** Green Human Resource Management, Employee Green Performance, Green Innovation, Organizational Sustainable Performance, Nepal, AMO Theory, Sustainability

### Introduction

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has emerged as a strategic mechanism for embedding sustainability into organizational culture by integrating environmental objectives into core HR functions. Defined as the application of environmentally conscious policies and practices in human resource management, GHRM aims to foster eco-friendly employee behavior and support organizational sustainability agendas (Huo et al., 2022). Key components of GHRM include **Green Recruitment and Selection (GRS)**, **Green Training (GT)**, and **Green Pay and Reward (GPR)** systems, which collectively contribute to enhancing **Green Performance (GP)** by encouraging employees to engage in environmental practices such as reducing resource use, recycling, and supporting green innovation initiatives (Gomes et al., 2023; Norton et al., 2015). Employees are increasingly recognized as pivotal agents in achieving sustainability goals. Through the strategic implementation of GHRM, organizations can attract and retain environmentally conscious individuals, equip them with the necessary skills through targeted training, and incentivize green behavior thus, driving significant improvements in employee environmental performance (Norton et al., 2015). Moreover, fostering a **Green Work Climate (GWC)** and supporting **Green Employee Behavior (GEB)** are equally essential for cultivating an environmentally responsible workforce (Huo et al., 2022).

In addition, green knowledge employees' awareness and understanding of sustainability practices has gained prominence as a key mediating variable. Equipping employees with this knowledge enhances their capacity to integrate green practices into daily operations, thereby amplifying both individual performance and organizational outcomes. Complementing this, Green Transformational Leadership (GTL) serves as a critical moderating factor. Leaders who visibly champion environmental values and model sustainable behavior can inspire employees to exceed formal expectations and voluntarily participate in green initiatives (Wang et al., 2018). Organizational sustainability, encompassing economic, environmental, and social dimensions, is significantly shaped by GHRM

practices (Henri & Journeault, 2008). Companies increasingly seek to embed green values not only for compliance and corporate social responsibility but also as a means to gain competitive advantage and long-term viability in an environmentally conscious market (Fraj et al., 2015; Cherian & Jacob, 2012). As such, aligning HR strategies with environmental objectives is becoming a fundamental aspect of modern organizational management.

However, traditional HRM approaches often overlook the environmental implications of HR decisions and underutilize the potential of employees to drive sustainability (Hameed et al., 2020). A paradigm shift is required one that aligns HR practices with sustainability imperatives, especially in developing economies like Nepal, where industries are gradually transitioning toward greener operations. Despite the growing global momentum, many Nepalese organizations lag in effectively integrating GHRM, resulting in missed opportunities for environmental performance improvements and value creation.

Recent studies suggest that Green Innovation (GI) the development and implementation of novel eco-friendly processes, products, and practices may serve as a critical mediator between GHRM practices and employee environmental performance. Nevertheless, the role of green innovation remains underexplored in the literature, particularly in the South Asian and Nepalese contexts, where sustainable development is both a challenge and a necessity (Gomes et al., 2023). A deeper understanding of how GI channels the influence of GHRM into measurable sustainability outcomes is crucial for shaping evidence based strategies and policies.

Given this research gap, the present study investigates the impact of GHRM practices on employee green performance and organizational sustainable performance in Nepal, with a focus on the mediating role of green innovation. This research contributes not only to the theoretical discourse on GHRM and sustainability but also offers actionable insights for HR professionals, policy makers, and business leaders striving to align employee behavior with organizational green objectives.

## **Literature Review**

### **Green Human Resource Management (GHRM)**

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) is a growing field that incorporates environmental sustainability into traditional HRM functions such as recruitment, training, performance appraisal, and compensation. Since its formal conceptualization around 2011, the field has garnered increasing academic and practical attention. Renwick et al. (2012) emphasized the necessity of integrating HRM with environmental management two areas previously treated independently. GHRM practices include green recruitment and selection, environmentally focused employee training, sustainability-oriented performance evaluation, green rewards, and the active engagement of employees in green initiatives. These practices aim to foster sustainable resource usage and minimize ecological impact within organizations. In doing so, they cultivate environmentally conscious employees whose behaviors align with broader organizational sustainability goals (Gupta et al., 2022).

Empirical findings suggest that the adoption of GHRM significantly enhances employee environmental behavior and knowledge (Saeed et al., 2018), while also contributing to organizational sustainability, innovation, and green product development (Ali et al., 2021; Wulansari et al., 2018). GHRM is also instrumental in developing green intellectual capital, which is critical to achieving economic, environmental, and social performance (Yong et al., 2022). In advanced economies, GHRM fosters innovation and deepens organizational commitment to environmental goals (Shafaei & Nejati, 2023). Conversely, in developing contexts, GHRM facilitates eco-conscious organizational cultures, resource efficiency, and a stronger corporate image (Suharti & Sugiarto, 2020). In Asia, particularly, GHRM is viewed as a strategic tool for promoting sustainability, with green training, teamwork, and managerial support identified as major success factors (Khan & Muktar, 2021).

### **Nepalese Context**

<In Nepal, the practice of GHRM remains relatively new and underdeveloped. Awareness and institutional readiness to implement GHRM are low, presenting a significant challenge (M.K. Chaudhary & Chaudhary, 2023). Despite this, emerging research has highlighted the benefits of GHRM in the Nepalese context. Devi (2018) found that GHRM practices positively influence both employee performance and sustainability in Nepalese organizations. In manufacturing sectors, Rijal (2023) reported that green training, green rewards, and supportive organizational culture significantly influence employee environmental commitment. Similarly, Huo et al. (2022) illustrated how a green work climate, engagement, and behavior mediate the relationship between GHRM and green performance. These findings underscore the relevance of GHRM in advancing environmental goals even in resource-constrained settings like Nepal.

## **Theoretical Review**

### **Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) Theory**

AMO theory serves as a foundational model for understanding how GHRM influences employee behavior and sustainability outcomes. It posits that performance is a function of ability, motivation, and opportunity. Research

by Arshad (2023) and Veerasamy (2023) supports the theory's application in GHRM, demonstrating how green training and performance systems enhance employees' environmental engagement. Rayner (2018) extended the theory by linking pro-environmental AMO factors to green behavior both within and beyond the workplace. Moreover, O.P. et al. (2022) emphasized motivation as a critical mediating factor between GHRM and green behavior. The AMO framework thus provides a robust explanation for the effectiveness of GHRM practices in enhancing sustainability.

### **Social Identity Theory**

Social identity theory explains how employee identification with organizational values, particularly environmental values, influences performance. Shen et al. (2018) and Rasool et al. (2020) demonstrated that organizational identification and environmental commitment are key mediators between GHRM and pro-environmental behavior. Merlin and Chen (2022) highlighted that employees' environmental orientation shapes how GHRM influences organizational image and attractiveness. These insights reaffirm the value of social identity theory in interpreting the psychological processes that underlie GHRM effectiveness.

### **Empirical Review**

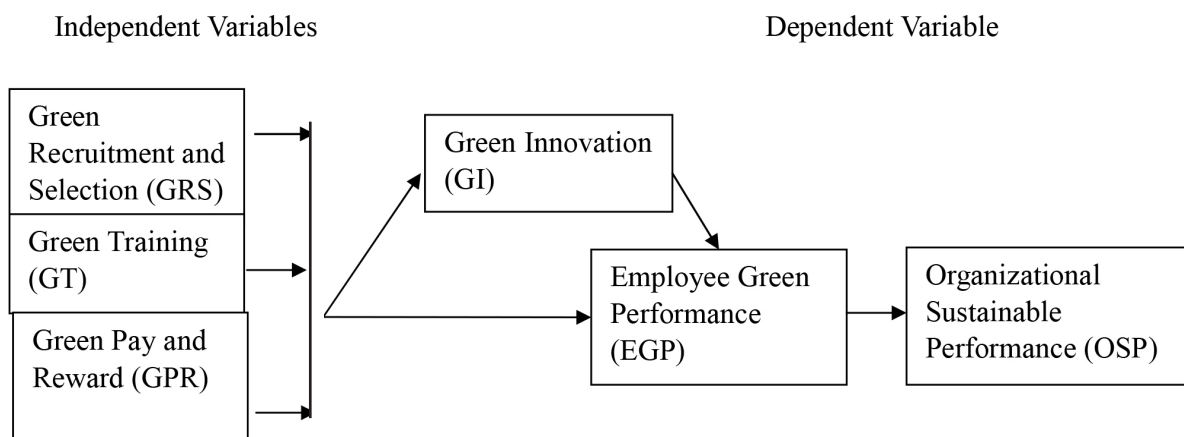
Empirical research consistently demonstrates that Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) positively influences employee behavior and organizational sustainability across various sectors. For instance, Pham et al. (2019) found that green training and employee involvement significantly enhanced Organizational Citizenship Behavior for the Environment (OCBE) within the hospitality industry. Similarly, Yong et al. (2019) reported that green recruitment, training, and performance management improved environmental outcomes in Malaysian manufacturing firms. In the hotel sector, Kim et al. (2019) observed that green training and performance appraisal effectively promoted eco-friendly behavior among employees. Masri and Jaaron (2017), studying Palestinian manufacturing firms, emphasized that green recruitment, training, and reward systems were linked not only to environmental but also economic and social performance.

In a broader organizational context, Roscoe et al. (2019) and Roscoe et al. (2023) highlighted that green training and employee engagement contribute significantly to developing a sustainability oriented organizational culture, which in turn boosts environmental performance. Tang et al. (2022) showed that employee green behavior mediates the relationship between GHRM and environmental outcomes, confirming the behavioral transmission mechanism through which green HR practices influence sustainability. Moreover, Zhao et al. (2025) introduced a technological dimension, demonstrating that the integration of artificial intelligence into GHRM practices such as recruitment and training enhances environmental performance through improved efficiency and strategic alignment.

In the Nepalese context, the application of GHRM is still emerging, yet several studies provide important insights. Devi (2018) found that GHRM practices such as green recruitment and training contribute to improved employee environmental behavior and sustainable organizational outcomes in Nepalese organizations. Rijal (2023) emphasized that green training, rewards, and organizational culture significantly enhance employees' environmental commitment within Nepal's manufacturing sector. Similarly, Chaudhary and Chaudhary (2023) reported that lack of awareness remains a key barrier to effective implementation, although the influence of GHRM on sustainability is positively acknowledged. Pandey and Thapa (2021) noted that public sector organizations adopting GHRM practices reported improvements in resource efficiency and stakeholder trust. These findings reinforce the importance of contextualizing GHRM strategies to local cultures, organizational structures, and levels of awareness.

Collectively, both global and Nepalese empirical studies confirm that GHRM practices enhance employee environmental performance and contribute to organizational sustainability. However, the mediating role of green innovation remains underexplored, particularly in developing countries like Nepal, where innovation adoption varies widely by sector and organizational capacity. This gap highlights the need for further research that integrates mediating and moderating variables such as green innovation and leadership to better understand the mechanisms through which GHRM drives sustainability outcomes.

## Conceptual Framework



Source: Modified from Huo et al., (2022); Awwad Al-Shammari et al., (2022) environmental, social, and economic performance

## Research Hypotheses

- H1: Green recruitment and selection positively influence employees' green performance.
- H2: Green training has a significant positive impact on employees' green performance.
- H3: Green pay and reward positively affect employees' green performance.
- H4: Employees' green performance significantly influences organizational sustainable performance.
- H5: Green innovation significantly mediates the relationship between Green HRM practices and employees' green performance.

## Operational Definitions of Variables

### Green Recruitment and Selection (GRS)

Green recruitment and selection refers to the organizational process of attracting and hiring individuals who demonstrate environmental values, knowledge, and competencies. This practice ensures that new hires align with the company's sustainability objectives and are capable of contributing to green initiatives within the organization.

### Green Training (GT)

Green training involves structured educational programs and workshops aimed at enhancing employees' awareness, skills, and attitudes towards environmental sustainability. Through such training, organizations equip their workforce to adopt and implement eco-friendly practices in their daily work routines.

### Green Pay and Reward (GPR)

Green pay and reward systems include financial and non-financial incentives provided to employees based on their contributions to environmental goals. These mechanisms serve as motivational tools to encourage proactive environmental behavior and reinforce a green culture within the organization.

### Green Innovation (GI)

Green innovation is defined as the development and application of novel products, processes, or practices that reduce environmental harm and promote sustainable resource use. It reflects an organization's capacity to embed environmental consciousness into innovation strategies, often stimulated by green HRM practices.

### Employee Green Performance (EGP)

Employee green performance denotes the degree to which employees engage in behaviors that support environmental sustainability at the workplace. This includes actions such as energy conservation, waste reduction, recycling, and participation in green initiatives that collectively contribute to environmental performance.

### Organizational Sustainable Performance (OSP)

Organizational sustainable performance encompasses the achievement of long-term environmental, economic, and social objectives. It reflects an organization's ability to operate efficiently while minimizing ecological impact, ensuring social responsibility, and maintaining financial viability.

## Research Methodology

This study adopts a positivist research philosophy, which emphasizes objective, quantifiable data collection and analysis to explain causal relationships between variables. A deductive research approach is employed, starting from theoretical foundations and hypothesis formulation, then testing these hypotheses through empirical

investigation. The study follows an explanatory research design, which is suitable for identifying cause and effect relationships between Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices, employee green performance, and organizational sustainable performance.

The research is situated in Chitwan, Nepal, a region marked by industrial diversity and growing environmental concerns. This setting is ideal for studying the role of GHRM in promoting sustainability in a developing economy. The unit of analysis includes HR managers, supervisors, senior executives, and general employees across various sectors such as manufacturing, services, banking/finance, and IT. Due to the need for knowledgeable respondents and practical limitations, a purposive sampling method was applied, selecting individuals familiar with GHRM policies and practices. A total of 200 respondents participated in the study, providing a robust dataset for meaningful analysis.

Data was collected through a structured questionnaire, designed to capture perceptions of green recruitment and selection, green training, green pay and rewards, green innovation, employee green performance, and organizational sustainable performance. A cross-sectional design was adopted, capturing responses at a single point in time to reflect current practices and outcomes.

For data analysis, the study employed SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic information. Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the strength and direction of relationships among variables. To test the hypotheses and understand the predictive power of the independent variables on the dependent variable, multiple regression analysis was performed. These techniques were chosen for their effectiveness in examining direct effects and quantifying the influence of GHRM practices on employee and organizational outcomes.

## Results And Findings

### Demographic Analysis

This demographic analysis provides valuable insights into the characteristics of respondents involved in the study on Green HRM Practices, Employee Green Performance, and Organizational Sustainable Performance. A total of 200 respondents from diverse industries, including manufacturing, services, banking/finance, IT, and others, were surveyed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Green HRM practices are applied across various sectors.

**Table 1: Meta Table**

Items	Number of Respondents	%
Gender		
Female	67	33.5
Male	133	66.5
<b>Age Group</b>		
25-35 years	65	32.5
36-45 years	45	22.5
Below 25 years	45	22.5
Above 45 years	45	22.5
Educational Qualification		
<b>Diploma</b>	45	22.5
Master's Degree	41	20.5
Bachelor's Degree	41	20.5
Other	40	20
Ph.D.	33	16.5
<b>Job Position</b>		
Manager	62	31
Senior Executive	50	25
Employee	45	22.5
Supervisor	43	21.5
<b>Years of Work Experience</b>		



4-7 years	54	27
Less than 1 year	54	27
1-3 years	53	26.5
8 years and above	39	19.5
<b>Industry Type</b>		
IT	55	27.5
Others	48	24
Service	37	18.5
Banking/Finance	32	16
Manufacturing	28	14

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The sample consisted of 200 respondents: 66.5% male and 33.5% female. The dominant age group was 25–35 years (32.5%), with balanced representation across younger and older age brackets. Educational backgrounds were diverse, with most holding bachelor's (20.5%) or master's degrees (20.5%). Respondents held positions ranging from employees to managers, and work experience ranged from less than 1 year to over 8 years. Industry representation included IT (27.5%), manufacturing (14%), services (18.5%), banking (16%), and others (24%).

### Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is a statistical method used to assess the strength and direction of relationships between two or more variables. It helps determine if changes in one variable are linked to changes in another, but it does not imply causation. Other factors, called confounding variables, may also be influencing the relationship. To explore causal links, correlation is often combined with techniques like regression analysis. Overall, correlation analysis offers valuable insights for data-driven decision-making and research interpretation. To explore the strength and nature of relationships between Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices and Organizational Sustainable Performance (OSP), correlation and multiple regression analyses were conducted using SPSS. The Pearson correlation coefficients indicated statistically significant and positive relationships among all the key variables. Notably, Employee Green Performance (EGP) showed the strongest correlation with OSP ( $r = 0.721$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), underscoring its pivotal role in achieving sustainable outcomes. Green Pay and Reward (GPR) and Green Innovation (GI) also demonstrated strong correlations ( $r = 0.655$  and  $r = 0.595$ , respectively), suggesting that incentivizing eco-friendly behavior and fostering innovation are effective levers for driving sustainability. Moderate correlations were found between Green Training (GT) and OSP ( $r = 0.535$ ), and between Green Recruitment and Selection (GRS) and OSP ( $r = 0.391$ ). While still significant, these results suggest a need for more robust implementation or strategic alignment in these areas.

**Table 2: Correlation Matrix**

		GRS	GT	GPR	GI	EGP	OSP
GRS	Pearson Correlation	1					
GT	Pearson Correlation	.521**	1				
GPR	Pearson Correlation	.518**	.617**	1			
GI	Pearson Correlation	.369**	.412**	.567**	1		
EGP	Pearson Correlation	.335**	.522**	.518**	.449**	1	
OSP	Pearson Correlation	.391**	.535**	.655**	.595**	.721**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS

### Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is a statistical technique used to explore the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. It helps researchers and analysts understand how changes in independent variables impact the dependent variable, allowing for predictions and quantification of these effects. Multiple regression analysis was performed to assess the predictive power of the GHRM variables on OSP. The model yielded a strong R value of 0.813 and an  $R^2$  of 0.661, indicating that approximately 66.1% of the variance in OSP can be explained by the combined effects of GRS, GT, GPR, GI, and EGP. Among these, EGP emerged as

the most influential predictor ( $\beta = 0.465$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), reinforcing the idea that employee behaviors are critical to achieving sustainability goals. GPR ( $\beta = 0.267$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and GI ( $\beta = 0.220$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) also significantly contributed to OSP, affirming that both financial incentives and a culture of innovation are essential drivers of sustainable performance. Interestingly, GT ( $\beta = 0.040$ ,  $p = 0.496$ ) and GRS ( $\beta = -0.005$ ,  $p = 0.925$ ) were not statistically significant predictors. This suggests that although recruitment and training are essential components of GHRM, their isolated effects may be insufficient unless integrated with broader performance and innovation strategies. Furthermore, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were all below 2.2, indicating no multicollinearity among the independent variables and confirming the reliability of the model.

**Table 3: Coefficients of organizational sustainability performance**

Model B		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig. Tolerance	Collinearity Statistics	
		Std. Error	Beta				VIF	
1	(Constant)	.249	.226		1.105	.270		
	GPR	.273	.063	.267	4.326	.000	.457	2.187
	GI	.205	.049	.220	4.210	.000	.640	1.562
	EGP	.432	.049	.465	8.881	.000	.638	1.567
	GT	.029	.043	.040	.683	.496	.517	1.934
	GRS	-.005	.052	-.005	-.095	.925	.661	1.512

a. Dependent Variable: OSP

Source: SPSS

## Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study underscore the critical role of GHRM in advancing organizational sustainability in the Nepalese context, particularly through employee engagement, green innovation, and reward systems. Consistent with the Ability Motivation Opportunity (AMO) framework, the results emphasize that motivated employees who are empowered to act and are rewarded for green behaviors are more likely to engage in environmentally responsible practices. The strong influence of Employee Green Performance on Organizational Sustainable Performance suggests that everyday environmental actions by employees such as energy conservation, waste reduction, and resource efficient practices are not just symbolic but fundamental to driving sustainable outcomes. This aligns with global literature and reinforces the importance of behavior driven HRM strategies.

However, the insignificant impact of Green Training and Recruitment points to potential implementation issues in the Nepalese organizational setting. This may stem from generic training programs that lack practical application or recruitment strategies that prioritize qualifications over environmental values. In a developing economy like Nepal, where environmental awareness is still evolving, these practices require stronger strategic integration and organizational follow through to be effective. Furthermore, Green Innovation's significant role highlights the need for organizations to go beyond traditional HRM and embrace creative, sustainability oriented problem solving at all levels.

## Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, this study contributes to the evolving field of GHRM by positioning Green Innovation as a mediator that links HRM practices to performance outcomes, thereby extending the AMO model within the context of a developing nation. It also brings contextual relevance to GHRM literature by examining how these dynamics unfold in Nepal, where environmental consciousness is rising but institutional support remains limited. This helps localize global frameworks, showing that while the principles remain the same, the execution must be adapted to specific economic, cultural, and infrastructural realities.

Practically, the results offer clear guidance for HR professionals and organizational leaders in Nepal. Emphasis should be placed on fostering a green culture that actively involves employees and aligns performance incentives with sustainability goals. Rewards and recognition systems should be restructured to include environmental performance metrics. Moreover, green innovation should be encouraged through supportive HRM policies, such as flexible work structures that promote eco-efficiency and training programs that focus on applied skills rather than theoretical knowledge. Recruitment processes should also be refined to include assessments of candidates' environmental values and potential contributions to sustainability objectives.

## Future Scope and Recommendations

While this study provides valuable insights, it also opens avenues for future research. Longitudinal studies could offer a deeper understanding of how green HRM practices influence performance over time, particularly in terms of lasting behavioral change and organizational adaptation. Further exploration into the role of green transformational leadership would be beneficial, especially in settings where top-down influence is essential, for cultural change. Sectorial studies comparing industries such as public vs. private or manufacturing vs. IT could uncover sector-specific strategies for enhancing GHRM outcomes. Moreover, expanding research beyond Chitwan to include urban hubs like Kathmandu or industrial corridors such as Birgunj could yield more representative findings. Incorporating qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups would enrich the quantitative results, providing deeper insight into employee perceptions, challenges in implementation, and motivational factors. Finally, the integration of technology and artificial intelligence in GHRM an emerging trend globally deserves further investigation in Nepal to explore how digital tools can streamline sustainability efforts and enhance data driven decision-making.

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