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# **A Systematic Literature Review on Green Employee Empowerment and Green Human Resource Management**

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## **ABSTRACT**

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*This study aims to systematically review and synthesize the existing literature on Green Employee Empowerment (GEE) within the context of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM). A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was conducted following the PRISMA framework. Data were collected from the*

*Dimensions database using the search strings “Green,” “Employee,” “Empowerment,” and “Human Resource Management,” focusing on journal articles published between 2016 and 2025. A total of 936 articles were initially identified, and after rigorous screening and eligibility assessment, 59 studies were included for synthesis. Thematic analysis was employed to extract patterns and conceptual relationships. The review identified six major themes: (a) GHRM practices and organizational outcomes, (b) employee empowerment and pro-environmental behavior, (c) leadership and psychological empowerment, (d) training and knowledge management, (e) work-life balance and employee retention, and (f) innovation, creativity, and green performance. Each theme demonstrated that empowerment fosters environmental responsibility, innovation, and sustainable organizational behavior through supportive HR systems and participatory cultures. The findings suggest that GEE serves as a*

*strategic enabler of sustainability by enhancing employee engagement, green innovation, and environmental citizenship. Organizations should integrate empowerment-based HR practices and leadership support to strengthen sustainable performance and green transformation.*

**Keywords:** Green employee empowerment, green human resource management, organizational performance, sustainability

## **INTRODUCTION**

The urgency of addressing environmental challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and unsustainable resource use has profoundly influenced how organizations define their goals and strategies in the twenty-first century. Today, businesses are not only expected to deliver economic performance but also to serve as active contributors to social and environmental well-being (Durand & Boarini, 2016). This shift has brought sustainability to the forefront of corporate strategy, reshaping how organizations manage people and resources (Suzanne Benn & Griffiths, 2014). Within this evolving context, Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has emerged as a key paradigm that integrates environmental sustainability into human resource functions, ensuring that the workforce plays an active role in achieving green objectives (Renwick et al., 2013; Ayyat & Safieh, 2025). GHRM practices go beyond traditional HR functions by embedding ecological considerations into recruitment, training, performance management, and organizational culture (Jabbour & Jabbour, 2016). At the heart of this green HR movement lies the concept of green employee empowerment, a critical mechanism that transforms sustainability strategies into everyday workplace practices and behaviors (Saeed et al., 2019).

Green employee empowerment is the process of enabling and motivating employees to actively participate in environmental management and sustainability initiatives (Adu Sarfo et al., 2024). It encompasses providing autonomy, developing competence, and nurturing a sense of responsibility toward ecological goals (Shahzad et al., 2023) or more precisely, green HRM, has significantly transformed in recent years. Human resources are an important and valuable asset of a firm. In this research, green HRM is concentrated on the areas where HRM is held accountable for the company's sustainability initiatives. The research examines the effects of green HRM on organizational performance in China while considering the mediating roles of green innovation (GI). When employees are empowered, they become agents of environmental change within their organizations initiating and sustaining actions such as reducing waste, conserving energy, or introducing eco-innovations (Sarkar, 2013). Empowered employees

also serve as conduits of sustainability culture, helping to integrate green thinking into organizational identity and operations (Pham et al., 2019). Thus, empowerment functions as a bridge that connects high-level environmental policies with on-the-ground implementation, ensuring that sustainability becomes an integral and lived part of organizational life rather than a symbolic commitment (Cauchon, 2018).

Traditionally, HRM was primarily viewed as a system for enhancing productivity, efficiency, and competitiveness. However, as the global sustainability agenda gained prominence, HRM scholars began to explore its potential in advancing ecological responsibility, leading to the rise of GHRM as a recognized field (Ren et al., 2018) increasingly salient questions not yet studied in the broader human resource management (HRM). This evolution reflects a growing recognition that human capital is central to achieving environmental objectives. Without employee engagement, motivation, and empowerment, even the most sophisticated environmental management systems may remain ineffective (Norton et al., 2014). Consequently, empowerment has been reframed not merely as a management tool for improving performance but as a strategic mechanism that enables employees to act as partners in sustainability transformation (Ghosh, 2013).

The idea of green employee empowerment is supported by several foundational theories in organizational behavior. Self-determination theory emphasizes that when employees experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness, they develop intrinsic motivation to engage in pro-environmental behavior (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Empowerment practices that nurture these psychological needs can foster deeper commitment to sustainability values. Social exchange theory offers another perspective, suggesting that employees reciprocate organizational trust and support by voluntarily engaging in behaviors that benefit the organization and the environment when they feel genuinely empowered (Norton et al., 2014). Meanwhile, the resource-based view (RBV) of the firm highlights empowered, environmentally conscious employees as valuable and inimitable resources that contribute to sustained competitive advantage (Jabbour & Jabbour, 2016).

Despite the growing academic interest in GHRM and sustainability, research specifically focusing on green employee empowerment remains fragmented. While numerous studies examine relationships between GHRM practices and outcomes such as environmental performance, organizational citizenship behavior, or green innovation (Pham et al., 2019; Singh et al., 2020), empowerment often appears as an implicit or secondary variable rather than a central focus. This lack of emphasis has led to conceptual ambiguity and inconsistent

definitions of empowerment across studies (Ren et al., 2018) increasingly salient questions not yet studied in the broader human resource management (HRM). Some researchers conceptualize empowerment as a psychological state a perception of autonomy, competence, and influence (Norton et al., 2014). While others view it as structural empowerment, reflected in access to resources, participation in decision-making, and freedom to act (Pinzone et al., 2019). A third stream of research focuses on behavioral empowerment, emphasizing proactive employee engagement and initiative in sustainability efforts (Singh et al., 2020). The coexistence of these diverse interpretations has made it difficult to establish a cohesive framework for understanding green employee empowerment within the broader HRM literature.

HRM serves as the primary channel through which empowerment can be operationalized in organizations. Recruitment and selection processes can prioritize candidates who value sustainability, ensuring that environmental consciousness becomes part of the organization's human capital base (Renwick et al., 2013). Training and development programs can build environmental competencies and increase employee confidence to contribute to green decision-making (Das & Dash, 2023). Performance appraisal systems can integrate environmental indicators, while reward and recognition mechanisms can incentivize eco-friendly behavior (Niu et al., 2023). Together, these HR practices create a climate where employees feel authorized and motivated to act in environmentally responsible ways. Moreover, leadership and organizational culture play crucial roles in shaping how empowerment translates into behavior. Leaders who demonstrate green transformational leadership can inspire employees to view sustainability as a shared purpose rather than an imposed requirement (Singh et al., 2020). A participatory culture that encourages open dialogue can further strengthen empowerment by reducing the fear of failure and promoting continuous green innovation (Ispiryan et al., 2024).

Despite its conceptual promise, the literature on green employee empowerment remains scattered, lacking systematic synthesis and theoretical integration. Many studies focus on isolated industries limiting the generalizability of findings (Kim & Wee, 2020; Pham et al., 2019). Although reviews of GHRM have provided valuable insights into sustainable HR practices (Jabbour & Jabbour, 2016; Ren et al., 2018) increasingly salient questions not yet studied in the broader human resource management (HRM), empowerment itself has received limited dedicated attention. This gap restricts a full understanding of empowerment's role as a mediating mechanism that links HRM practices with environmental and organizational outcomes. A systematic examination of how empowerment has been conceptualized, measured, and applied is therefore needed to consolidate fragmented knowledge and identify avenues for

future research. This study aims to systematically review and synthesize the existing literature on green employee empowerment within the domain of human resource management. Its objectives are to explore how empowerment practices contribute to organizational and environmental performance; to identify the key themes related to GEE and GHRM.

In an era of global sustainability efforts, empowering employees to act responsibly and creatively in addressing environmental challenges is vital. Organizations that empower their workforce not only improve their own ecological performance but also contribute to broader global goals, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) notably SDG 8, which promotes decent work and economic growth, and SDG 13, which addresses climate action. Green employee empowerment thus serves as a bridge linking individual behavior, organizational systems, and global sustainability objectives.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The GHRM framework gave rise to the GEE idea, which is backed by an organizational and behavioral theories. These theories show how people and organizations align their beliefs and behaviors to promote environmental sustainability. They also show how GEE emphasizes structural, social, and psychological processes that motivate workers to take an active role in accomplishing environmental objectives. The self-determination theory, the social exchange theory, the resource-based view, the empowerment theory, and the institutional theory are the main theoretical pillars of GEE. When taken as a whole, these theories show how empowerment leads to sustainability at the individual, organizational, and societal levels.

Self-determination theory (SDT) provides a psychological foundation, emphasizing that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are essential for intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000) When employees perceive decision-making autonomy, feel capable of executing environmental responsibilities, and identify with a shared sustainability objective, they demonstrate proactive engagement in green practices (Shahzad et al., 2023) or more precisely, green HRM, has significantly transformed in recent years. Human resources are an important and valuable asset of a firm. In this research, green HRM is concentrated on the areas where HRM is held accountable for the company's sustainability initiatives. The research examines the effects of green HRM on organizational performance in China while considering the mediating roles of green innovation (GI). Organizations can enhance these drivers through decentralized structures, team-based collaboration, and environmental training, thereby fostering ecological initiative and sustained pro-environmental behavior (Pham et al., 2019;

Ren et al., 2018) increasingly salient questions not yet studied in the broader human resource management (HRM).

Social exchange theory (SET) complements SDT by highlighting the reciprocal nature of empowerment. Employees respond positively to organizational support and trust by engaging in voluntary environmental behaviors, including waste reduction, energy conservation, and green innovation (Blau, 1961; Norton et al., 2014). Empowerment strengthens the psychological contract between employees and organizations, encouraging organizational citizenship behavior for the environment (OCBE) and fostering emotional engagement in sustainability initiatives (Murray & Holmes, 2021; Pham et al., 2019).

Resource-based view (RBV) frames empowered employees as valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable organizational resources (Barney, 1991). Employees equipped with knowledge, motivation, and proactivity serve as key drivers of green innovation, energy-efficient systems, and eco-friendly practices (Jabbour & Jabbour, 2016; Renwick et al., 2013). When integrated with HR processes such as recruitment, training, and performance appraisal, empowerment enhances organizational resilience and competitive advantage in environmental sustainability (Das & Dash, 2023). Empowerment theory explicitly bridges psychological and structural aspects of GEE, distinguishing between employees' perceived impact and organizational provisions of authority and resources (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Structural empowerment encompasses assigning environmental responsibilities, promoting sustainability communication, and including employees in committees, while psychological empowerment fosters a sense of significance and self-efficacy in ecological outcomes (Norton et al., 2014; Pinzone et al., 2019). The interplay of both forms enables proactive, grassroots environmental action without direct managerial oversight (Sarkar, 2013).

Institutional theory situates GEE within broader environmental and regulatory frameworks, illustrating how coercive, normative, and mimetic pressures influence organizational adoption of green practices ((Durand & Boarini, 2016; Greenwood & Meyer, 2008). Empowered employees perceive compliance with external sustainability mandates, such as ISO 14001 or UN SDGs, as personal responsibility rather than obligation, facilitating internalization of sustainable behaviors (Ispiryanyan et al., 2024). Industry-specific contexts further moderate empowerment structures, where highly regulated sectors exhibit formalized mechanisms, while others may implement symbolic strategies for legitimacy (Kim & Wee, 2020).

## METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to address the research problem. The research question was developed using the PICo framework, which incorporates three key elements: Population (P), the main Interest of the study (I), and the Context (Co) within which the phenomenon is examined. GEE is considered as population, GHRM are researcher interests, and the study is contextualized from a global perspective. The PRISMA approach by Liberati et al. (2009), served as the guide for this study's systematic literature review (SLR) methodology. With differing degrees of certainty, the SLR sought to enable well-informed decisions regarding the research issues (Briner & Denyer, 2012). The review process followed the "identification", "screening" and "included" phases of PRISMA.

In first stage of the review protocol, the data extraction process occurred on Jan 27, 2025, from the Dimensions database, employing a precise set of search parameters meticulously defined beforehand. The study used search strings of "Green" and "Employee" and "Empowerment" and "Human Resource Management" within the comprehensive dataset. The dataset under scrutiny comprises scholarly articles released during the timeframe spanning from 2016 to 2025, with a particular emphasis on those disseminated in reputable journals such as Sustainability, Journal of Cleaner Production, Cogent Business & Management, Frontiers in Psychology, Business Strategy and the Environment, Benchmarking an International Journal, Heliyon, Journal of Business Research, International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management. Solely articles were considered in this search endeavour, and it is noteworthy to mention that all the chosen publications fall under the category of Open Access. In total 936 articles were identified initially.

The initial screening was conducted to meet the inclusion requirements that were published in "English" and "Journals Articles" from "2016-2025" were included through the use of automatic article screening features by study kind, language, report type, and publication date in "dimensions" database. The non -English articles and articles published within the year range under consideration; conference papers, book chapters, research notes, editorial comments, and unpublished data, such as institutional reports and dissertations. The researcher removed 549 articles were excluded due to document types, irrelevant articles and language reasons. After screening the relevant articles as per the research questions, 387 articles were eligible articles. Among them, only 65 articles are included in the review process based on

citation, objectives and research questions. After a detailed study of the full articles, only 59 articles were used for the synthesizing process.

## **RESULTS**

This section synthesizes the findings from 59 articles and thematic result from the findings.

### **Table 1**

*Meta Table Including Author (Year) and Results*

Author (Year)	Results
Lin et al. (2024)	A significant positive correlation exists between green work-life balance and employee retention. Green human resource management (GHRM) practices significantly influenced corporate sustainability performance. GHRM practices did not exert a statistically significant positive influence on ER. A notable positive correlation between green innovation (GI) and corporate social performance (CSP) was identified.
Hussein and Zakhem (2024)	Brand citizenship behavior (BCB) and organizational pride (OP) are positively impacted by green human resource management (GHRM) practices, and lower turnover intention is linked to higher OP. The relationships among OP, BCB, and GHRM practices are moderately impacted by individual green values (IGVs).
Ren et al. (2024)	Employee environmental awareness and environmentally specific transformational leadership (ESTL) have a positive correlation, which improves pro-environmental performance. ESTL has a significant impact on pro-environmental performance through environmental awareness. The association between ESTL and pro-environmental performance is moderated by emotional exhaustion, with the effect being greater at lower emotional exhaustion levels. Emotional exhaustion and ESTL have a negative correlation. There are limitations in establishing direct relationships because the study's design precludes drawing conclusions about causality.



- Cao et al. (2024) Employee eco-friendly behavior (EEBH), job satisfaction (EJoS), and organizational commitment (EOC) are all strongly impacted by environmental concern (ENVC). EEBH is influenced both directly and indirectly by EOC and EJoS. The interaction between ENVC and EJoS is mediated by EOC. Environmental performance is positively stimulated by EEBH.
- He and Chen (2024) The results show that ESG performance is improved by digital transformation, especially in non-state-owned businesses as opposed to state-owned ones. Environmental regulation influences firm-level ESG performance by moderating the positive effects of corporate digital transformation on labor quantity and skill level.
- Hassanein et al. (2024) According to the report, Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) helps the tourist and hospitality industry's high staff turnover rates by improving employee retention. Support was given to green innovation's (GI) mediation role, which improved knowledge of the connection between GHRM and employee retention (ER).
- El-Sherbeeny et al. (2023) Better ergonomics improves job performance, according to the study, which also demonstrated a favorable correlation between employees' perceptions of ergonomics and their job performance. Job performance was favorably correlated with work engagement and talent retention, indicating that these elements support higher performance.
- Rogozińska-Pawelczyk (2023) The fulfillment of the psychological contract between knowledge workers is favorably correlated with inclusive leadership. Knowledge workers' well-being is improved and proactive job behavior is positively correlated with the psychological contract being fulfilled. According to the study, employment and life-related well-being are positively correlated with the psychological contract being fulfilled. Open and trustworthy relationship between an employer and employee strengthens psychological attachments to the workplace and encourages proactive work-related behavior.

- Li et al. (2023) The study discovered a significant inverse relationship between employee productivity and constructive responses (CR). Defensive responses (DR) and employee productivity were significantly positively correlated. Retaliatory responses (RR) also showed a significant negative correlation with productivity. The negative correlation between CR and productivity grew, whereas the positive correlation between DR and productivity grew. There is a significant positive correlation between productivity and organizational agility.
- Xiang et al. (2023) Employee lifecycle management (ELM) procedures in businesses in China, Russia, and Indonesia have undergone significant change as a result of innovation, digital technologies, and artificial intelligence. Depending on labor costs, the extent of the activity, and the nation's preparedness to adopt new technologies, different percentages of businesses continue the ELM digital transformation process. The results support the beneficial effects of AI, digital technology, and innovation on HRM and ELM strategies, which in turn lead to increased productivity.
- Lehyani et al. (2023) Employee effectiveness in Tunisian small and medium-sized businesses is positively impacted by Knowledge Management (KM) components and Total Quality Management (TQM) practices. Through a variety of management techniques, such as leadership and continuous improvement, the study discovered that TQM practices greatly increase employee effectiveness. According to the study, businesses that prioritize good management practices see higher employee effectiveness levels than those that don't.
- Y. Zhang et al. (2019) Green workplace behavior is strongly impacted by information need. In-role behaviors are not significantly impacted by rewards; only extra-role green behaviors are significantly predicted by them. While some factors were overlooked for the rejected hypotheses, the proposed model received the majority of the support.

- Karimi et al. (2023) Innovative work practices among employees were found to be positively and directly correlated with transformational leadership. Employees' innovative work behavior and transformational leadership were found to be partially mediated by hope and self-efficacy. The four sub-constructs of psychological capital self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism as well as innovative work practices and transformational leadership were found to have significant correlations with one another. The findings imply that improving innovative work behavior in organizations requires managing both psychological capital and transformational leadership.
- Meng et al. (2023) Green organizational citizenship behavior and green lifestyle are positively and significantly impacted by green human resource management (HRM) practices. The relationship between green organizational citizenship behavior and green HRM practices is positively mediated by a green lifestyle. The association between green organizational citizenship behavior and a green lifestyle is considerably moderated by green shared values. Green innovation has a negligible moderating effect on the association between green HRM practices and green lifestyles.
- Hermanto and Srimulyani (2022) At both the individual (OCBI) and organizational (OCBO) levels, organizational citizenship behavior is greatly enhanced by organizational justice (OJ). OJ significantly improves employee performance (EP). EP is greatly enhanced by OCBI. EP is greatly enhanced by OCBO. The impact of OJ on EP is partially mediated by OCBI and OCBO.
- Davidescu et al. (2020) Employer-sponsored training programs that promoted functional flexibility helped to raise overall job satisfaction. The idea about workspace flexibility was supported by the findings that co-working, home working, and partial home working were linked to higher levels of overall job satisfaction.
- Gusmerotti et al. (2023) Since there is no discernible difference between early and late responders, the results do not appear to be at risk from non-response bias.

- Adu-Gyamfi et al. (2021) In higher education institutions, social performance is positively and significantly impacted by workplace diversity, health and safety, and training and development ( $\beta$  values not specified). Social performance was found to be negatively and insignificantly impacted by work-life balance. Social performance and human rights were positively but not significantly correlated. According to the study, ICSR practices have a major impact on organizational and employee performance.
- Hernita et al. (2021) The productivity of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in Makassar City, Indonesia, rises when human resource capacity is strengthened. Sustainability of SMEs is significantly positively correlated with the combination of increasing human resource capacity, utilizing technology, and diversifying the business. SMEs currently use technology sparingly and in a traditional manner, which could have an impact on sustainability and productivity.
- Ioannides et al. (2021) In order to promote dignity and respectable working conditions, the paper emphasizes the necessity of a human-centered research agenda that centers on the agency and resources of workers in the tourism industry. It names two major obstacles to establishing dignity in the tourism labor market: the global neoliberal environment and technological advancements. The objectification of workers, according to the authors, devalues their humanity and makes conversations about sustainable tourism more difficult. Social equity in tourism sustainability ought to be given the same weight as environmental and financial considerations.
- Jurij et al. (2023) According to the systematic review, job burnout, low job motivation, and limited job autonomy all have a positive effect on eldercare workers' intentions to leave their jobs.
- Abubakar et al. (2024) The study highlights the necessity of an educational framework that prioritizes holistic development over merely academic preparation.

- Hitka et al. (2019) Human resource management and career development are closely related, with important motivators for employees looking to advance personally being related to career aspirations. Employee satisfaction is increased and human capital can be used more efficiently when company goals and employee goals are aligned. Employees with higher education have more motivational factors, according to the research, while those with less secondary education have less favorable circumstances.
- Al-Mansoori and Koç (2019) The innovative outputs in patents and h-index were lower for BC than for MC, even though BC had higher transformational leadership scores.
- Lorincová et al. (2019) The study found that men and women perceive motivation differently, especially when it comes to blue-collar jobs. The findings suggested that a motivational program for managerial roles could be created without taking gender into account.
- Navajas-Romero et al. (2019) Dependent self-employed workers' work engagement is positively impacted by the skills and discretion index, indicating that greater control and attributions enhance their engagement. According to the research, dependent self-employed workers have a less favorable social environment than non-dependent self-employed workers, which suggests that their working conditions differ.
- Zhang et al. (2019) The analysis showed that social network analysis works well for researching the training practices of corporate employees. From the standpoint of employee training, recommendations were made to reduce training investment costs and improve the sustainability of human resource management.
- Pinzone et al. (2019) All of the developed hypotheses have been confirmed overall, showing that "green" training promotes environmental sustainability and raises healthcare professionals' job satisfaction.

- Appiah Kissi et al. (2024) The results showed that green performance evaluations rise in tandem with any percentage increase in green hiring and selection. The study emphasized the significance of integrating environmental consciousness into job design and showed how green job analysis is related to green recruitment and selection.
- Yang and Li (2023) According to the study, employees' green innovation behavior (GIB) is significantly improved by green human resource management (GHRM). The relationship between GHRM and GIB is positively mediated by employees' green organizational commitment (GOC). Both the mediating effect of GOC and the interaction between GOC and GIB are positively moderated by knowledge sharing.
- Ahmed and Khan (2023) Contrary to earlier research and initial assumptions, the study finds a positive correlation between employees' unethical pro-organizational behavior and ethical leadership. The relationship between unethical pro-organizational behavior by employees and ethical leadership is positively mediated by psychological empowerment of employees. Employee moral identity moderates the relationship between psychological empowerment and ethical leadership.
- Mahdavi et al. (2023) The findings suggested that using all-encompassing approaches could lessen burnout and boost healthcare workers' output.
- Ng et al. (2024) pay and benefits, management and leadership, work-life balance and flexibility, organizational culture and working conditions, and job satisfaction and motivation. Flexibility and work-life balance were considered the least important factors influencing employee performance, while pay and benefits were found to be the most significant.
- Farooq and Salam (2021) The study found that CPP had no discernible effect on SQ. The results demonstrated that motivated workers are more effective, which raises DSIW.

- Abolnasser et al. (2023) According to the study, transformational leadership (TLS) significantly improves hotel staff members' psychological well-being (PWB). Significant independent and serial mediational effects of job satisfaction (JS) and employee engagement (EEG) on the TLS-PWB relationship were found. The TLS-PWB relationship was found to be more affected by EEG than by JS. The possible moderating effects of demographic variables like age, education, and work experience on the TLS-PWB relationship were not investigated in this study.
- Lindert et al. (2023) There was a significant increase in social capital over time. Psychological wellbeing and perceived transformational leadership did not change significantly. Transformational leadership significantly influenced transformational leadership. Social capital and psychological wellbeing had a significant effect on psychological wellbeing. Age, gender, and transformational leadership did not significantly affect psychological wellbeing.
- Kotera et al. (2022) The study created the SWEIMS, a condensed version of the WEIMS with 12 items assessing six different forms of work motivation. Both samples, SWEIMS and the original WEIMS showed strong correlations. It was determined that SWEIMS's internal consistency was sufficient. Confirmatory factor analyses were used to successfully replicate the original WEIMS's six-factor model in SWEIMS. SWEIMS's internal consistencies were judged adequate to high, despite being marginally lower than those of the original WEIMS.
- Hu et al. (2022) Green creative performance (GCP) is significantly enhanced by green motivation (GM). Green creative process engagement (GCPE) was found to be significantly positively predicted by GM. When taking GCPE into account, the effect of GM on GCP shows partial mediation.
- Sugiarto and Huruta (2023) Green HRM and green creativity were found to be mediated by employee green commitment. Another mediating factor influencing the relationship between green HRM and green creativity was employee job satisfaction.

- (Deng et al., 2022) Common method bias (CMB) was not a major problem, as the study did not find any common latent factor (CLF) that could account for a sizable portion of variance. In order to successfully improve environmental outcomes, hospitals must match their CSR strategies with leadership values, according to the research.
- Marin-Garcia and Bonavia (2021) Job satisfaction, work engagement, and social well-being are all positively impacted by psychological empowerment, which is positively predicted by structural empowerment. There were no correlations between work stress and physical health as anticipated.
- Molnar et al. (2021) Employee pro-environmental behavior (EPB) is positively impacted by corporate social responsibility at the employee level (CSR-E). The relationship between CSR-E and EPB was found to be partially mediated by ethical leadership (ELS).
- Wang et al. (2020) Employee job crafting was positively correlated with social factors, particularly positive leadership styles (e.g., transformational and empowering). Although there was a stronger correlation between leadership and employee job crafting, coworker support also demonstrated a positive relationship. The relationships between social factors and work outcomes, including job performance and well-being, have been found to be positively mediated by employee job crafting.
- Al-Sabi et al. (2024) Pro-environmental behavior (PeB) and job satisfaction (eJs) among employees in Jordan's luxury hotels are strongly influenced by green employee empowerment (gee) and green training (gt). Gee significantly improves environmental performance (eP). eJs has a major and advantageous impact on eP. gt significantly and favorably affects eJs and PeB. Interestingly, the effect of gt on eP is negligible.



- Yan et al. (2023) The study showed that employee innovative behavior is positively influenced by decent work perception (DWP), suggesting a positive relationship between the two variables. It was discovered that the relationship between DWP and employee innovative behavior was fully mediated by job engagement. Job burnout's mediating role in the association between DWP and innovative employee behavior was not supported by the study. The association between DWP and job engagement was positively moderated by authoritarian leadership. On the other hand, the association between DWP and job burnout was adversely moderated by authoritarian leadership.
- Song et al. (2023) Employees' green, creative behavior is positively impacted by their perception of green HRM. The relationship between employees' green innovative behavior and perceived green human resource management is mediated by green behavior intention, self-efficacy of environmental protection behavior, and identification with the company's green environmental protection system. The association between employees' green innovative behavior and the identity of a green environmental protection system is moderated by green supply chain management.
- Horoub and Zargar (2022) According to the study, empowering leadership has a major positive impact on university teachers' job satisfaction in Palestine, suggesting that it improves working conditions after the pandemic. Leader-member exchange (LMX) was found to play a moderating role, indicating that improved interactions between teachers and leaders can further boost job satisfaction. One important psychological factor that was found to be mediating the relationship between empowering leadership and job satisfaction was trust in leaders.
- Guo et al. (2023) The results show that OC improves the relationship between EL and EWB by acting as a mediator. The study supported the idea that among Chinese public sector workers, EL has a positive impact on EWB.
- Piwowar-Sulej (2021) Training on environmental sustainability is still lacking, and businesses and outside educational institutions don't work together very well.
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- Cheng et al. (2023) The study found that the relationship between employees' pro-environmental behavior (PEB) and corporate green innovation performance (GIP) was positively moderated by leaders' PEB. On the other hand, the relationship between employees' PEB and GIP is negatively moderated by increased innovation resistance. The impact of employees' PEB on GIP was found to be significantly mediated by green organizational identity (GOI). It was found that resistance to resource innovation had a greater effect on GIP than resistance to technology innovation.
- Jing et al. (2022) In high-tech companies, empowering team leadership has a direct, positive, and cross-level impact on innovation passion. The relationship between innovation self-efficacy and innovation passion is positively adjusted by innovation self-efficacy. The relationship between innovation self-efficacy and innovation passion is positively moderated by an innovation climate that is based on advantages.
- Khaskhely et al. (2022) Dynamic capabilities and corporate sustainable performance were found to be significantly positively correlated. It has been demonstrated that GHRM practices have a major impact on sustainable performance, especially when it comes to green hiring and selection.
- Sidney et al. (2022) The study discovered that employee green creativity is positively impacted by green transformational leadership, with green process engagement and green human resource management (GHRM) playing important mediating roles. Green transformational leaders foster green innovation among their followers, according to the study. The findings imply that the relationship between transformational leadership and green process engagement is considerably moderated by the green innovation strategy.
- Ravhudzulo and Eresia-Eke (2024) Employee performance and telecommuting propensity did not directly correlate, according to the study. In general, workers in the ICT industry in South Africa demonstrated increased performance and engagement when working from home.

- Jiang et al. (2022) Knowledge sharing (KS) has a significant impact on employee creative performance (ECP). Knowledge sharing mediates the relationship between employee creative performance and psychological contract. There was no statistically significant difference between respondents and non-respondents. Work-related curiosity and organizational socialization strategies were found to have significant moderating effects on the relationships.
- Zhou and Chen (2021) The study showed that the relationship between emotional exhaustion and psychological empowerment is mediated by organizational embeddedness and psychological safety. The dual mediation model is supported by the research, which shows that greater psychological empowerment reduces emotional exhaustion by increasing organizational embeddedness and psychological safety.
- Chong and Zainal (2024) The findings showed that employee agility played important partial mediating roles in the relationships between eV, DI, tI, and both task performance (tP) and contextual performance (cP). Even after the mediator was included, the direct effects of eV, DI, and tI on tP and cP were still significant.
- Graham et al. (2023) Findings for eco-design practices, suggesting that GSCM practices based on product design are less significant. All GSCM practices including eco-design, clean technology, waste management, and environmental logistics were positively and significantly correlated with environmental performance. In contrast to “eco-design,” which had a non-significant relationship with “top management”, “clean technology” and “top management” had a significant relationship.
- Ali et al. (2020) In Saudi Arabia, job insecurity dramatically lowers employee engagement among foreign workers. Increased employee burnout is a result of job insecurity. Employees’ intentions to leave are positively correlated with job insecurity. The detrimental effects of job insecurity on employee burnout and resignation intentions are lessened by a positive company reputation. Burnout during job insecurity is also lessened by high levels of employee identification with the organization.
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## **Green Human Resource Management Practices and Organizational Outcomes**

The synthesis of the reviewed literature indicates that Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices significantly influence organizational outcomes, including sustainability performance, social responsibility, and employee retention. Lin et al. (2024) reported a positive effect of GHRM on corporate sustainability performance, although its direct effect on employee retention was not statistically significant. Similarly, Hussein and Zakhem (2024) observed that GHRM practices enhance brand citizenship behavior and organizational pride, which, in turn, reduce turnover intentions, moderated by individual green values. Khaskheli et al. (2022) further emphasized the role of dynamic sustainable capabilities, revealing a significant positive correlation between GHRM practices and corporate sustainable performance. Meng et al. (2023) showed that green organizational citizenship behavior and green lifestyle are positively influenced by GHRM, with green shared values moderating these relationships. Song et al. (2023) highlighted that employees' perceptions of GHRM influence their green innovative behavior, mediated by green behavioral intentions and self-efficacy. GHRM serves as a strategic mechanism to integrate environmental considerations into HRM processes, linking organizational policies with employee behaviors to enhance overall firm performance (Al-Mansoori & Koç, 2019; Sugiarto & Huruta, 2023; Yang & Li, 2023). Organizations employing comprehensive GHRM strategies are more likely to achieve improved sustainability outcomes while fostering employee engagement, creativity, and commitment to green initiatives. These findings align with the research objective of exploring how GHRM practices shape both organizational outcomes and employee empowerment within sustainability-oriented workplaces. The cumulative evidence highlights the multidimensional benefits of implementing structured GHRM practices, including enhanced corporate sustainability, employee pro-environmental behavior, and organizational competitiveness (Cao et al., 2024; Hu et al., 2022; Xiang et al., 2023).

## **Employee Green Empowerment and Pro-Environmental Behavior**

The literature consistently highlights the centrality of green employee empowerment in fostering pro-environmental behaviors (PEB) and green innovation. Empowering employees to engage in sustainability initiatives enhances both individual and organizational outcomes. Hu et al. (2022) found that green motivation positively predicts green creative performance through engagement in green processes, confirming partial mediation effects. Yang & Li (2023) reported that GHRM positively influences employees' green innovation behavior, mediated by green organizational commitment and moderated by knowledge sharing. Sugiarto

& Huruta (2023) demonstrates that employee green commitment and job satisfaction mediate the relationship between GHRM and green creativity. Sidney et al. (2022) emphasized that green transformational leadership enhances green creativity via green process engagement. Molnar et al. (2021) highlighted the positive impact of CSR at the employee level on pro-environmental behavior, mediated by ethical leadership and quality of work-life. Al-Sabi et al. (2024) demonstrated that green employee empowerment and green training enhance environmental performance and job satisfaction among hotel employees. Collectively, these findings suggest that structured empowerment initiatives, including knowledge-sharing, green leadership, and training interventions, are instrumental in promoting sustainable behaviors at the workplace (Cheng et al., 2023; Chong & Zainal, 2024; Song et al., 2023). Empowerment not only facilitates environmentally responsible behaviors but also nurtures innovation and engagement, highlighting its dual role in individual and organizational sustainability (Hu et al., 2022; Yang & Li, 2023). The empirical evidence highlights that organizations adopting a systematic approach to green empowerment are likely to achieve greater employee engagement, environmental responsibility, and innovation.

### **Leadership, Psychological Empowerment, and Employee Well-Being**

Leadership styles and psychological empowerment emerge as critical determinants of employee well-being and organizational sustainability. Transformational, empowering, and ethical leadership practices significantly influence employees' psychological states and workplace behaviors. Abolnasser et al. (2023) found that transformational leadership enhances psychological well-being via mediators such as job satisfaction and employee engagement. Horoub & Zargar (2022) reported that empowering leadership increases job satisfaction among university teachers, mediated by trust in leaders and moderated by leader-member exchange. Guo et al. (2023) highlighted that inclusive leadership, through the fulfillment of psychological contracts, positively impacts knowledge workers' proactive job behavior and well-being. Leadership practices fostering autonomy, trust, and empowerment enhance employees' social, psychological, and professional outcomes (Cheng et al., 2023; Jing et al., 2022; Mahdavi et al., 2023). These leadership-driven mechanisms directly influence engagement, job satisfaction, and pro-environmental behavior, demonstrating their integral role in aligning human resource management strategies with sustainability objectives (Lin et al., 2024; Ng et al., 2024). Empirical evidence consistently highlights that psychologically empowered employees exhibit higher commitment, lower turnover intentions, and increased participation in green initiatives,

emphasizing the interplay between leadership, empowerment, and sustainable organizational performance (Cao et al., 2024; Hussein and Zakhem, 2024).

### **Training, Knowledge Management, and Skill Development**

Employee skill development, knowledge sharing, and green training are fundamental for fostering sustainable behaviors and enhancing organizational outcomes. Studies indicate that targeted training programs, knowledge management (KM), and total quality management (TQM) practices significantly improve employee performance, effectiveness, and engagement. Lehyani et al. (2023) reported that KM components and TQM practices positively impact employee effectiveness. Zhang et al. (2019) identified the role of structured corporate training in enhancing employee readiness and engagement. While Pinzone et al. (2019) emphasized that green training boosts environmental sustainability and job satisfaction among healthcare professionals. Molnar et al. (2021) showed that CSR initiatives at the employee level improve pro-environmental behavior through knowledge-based mechanisms. Piwowar-Sulej (2021) highlighted gaps in digital competencies and environmental sustainability knowledge among engineers, emphasizing the need for continuous professional development. Furthermore, the mediation role of knowledge sharing in enhancing creative and green behaviors is supported by Jiang et al. (2022) while Kotera et al. (2022) demonstrated that validated motivational assessment tools effectively guide skill development. Structured training and knowledge management practices empower employees to engage in innovative and environmentally responsible work, bridging gaps in expertise while reinforcing organizational sustainability objectives (Hu et al., 2022; Song et al., 2023; Yang & Li, 2023). So, employee competence development is integral to fostering innovation, green behavior, and organizational resilience.

### **Work-Life Balance, Flexibility, and Employee Retention**

The relationship between work-life balance, flexibility, and employee retention is intricately linked with GHRM practices and empowerment initiatives. Lin et al. (2024) identified a significant positive correlation between green work-life balance and employee retention. There is a role of flexible and autonomous work arrangements for WLB. Davidescu et al. (2020) actual human resource management (HRM revealed that workspace flexibility, including co-

working and home-based arrangements, enhances overall job satisfaction. Ng et al. (2024) emphasized that pay, benefits, and organizational culture significantly influence employee motivation. Hussein and Zakhem (2024) highlighted that organizational pride, strengthened by green HRM practices, reduces turnover intentions. Abubakar et al. (2024) emphasized holistic development approaches that support employee well-being and engagement. While Jurij et al. (2023) identified job burnout and low autonomy as key predictors of turnover intentions. Integrating flexible, supportive, and environmentally responsible HR practices enhances retention and satisfaction (Hassanein et al., 2024; Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2022). Empowering employees, offering green training, and supporting work-life integration can mitigate turnover and foster engagement, aligning individual and organizational sustainability goals. Flexibility, autonomy, and work-life balance are critical levers in promoting green employee retention and sustained organizational performance.

### **Innovation, Creativity, and Green Performance**

Employee innovation and creativity emerge as essential drivers of organizational green performance and sustainable outcomes. Hu et al. (2022) found that green motivation and green creative process engagement significantly enhance green creative performance. Yang and Li (2023) highlighted that GHRM promotes green innovative behavior, mediated by green organizational commitment and moderated by knowledge sharing. Song et al. (2023) demonstrated that employees' green innovative behavior is influenced by perceived GHRM, mediated by green behavior intentions, self-efficacy, and environmental identification. Sidney et al. (2022) emphasized the role of green transformational leadership in stimulating green creativity, moderated by green innovation strategies. Karimi et al. (2023) showed that innovative work practices are positively correlated with transformational leadership and psychological capital dimensions. Jiang et al. (2022) highlighted knowledge sharing as a mediator linking psychological contract fulfillment and employee creative performance. Organizational interventions, including structured GHRM, green leadership, and knowledge-sharing frameworks, are critical in fostering employee creativity and innovation. Innovative behaviors contribute directly to environmental sustainability, corporate social performance, and organizational competitiveness (Cheng et al., 2023; Molnar et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2020). The evidence confirms that creativity and innovation, supported by GHRM and empowerment practices, constitute a strategic mechanism for aligning individual capacities with sustainable organizational objectives.

## **DISCUSSION**

The present review highlights the critical role of GHRM practices in fostering GEE and advancing organizational sustainability. Across the studies analyzed, it is evident that GHRM functions as a strategic mechanism, aligning individual, organizational, and societal objectives through empowerment, training, and engagement initiatives. The theoretical underpinnings of SDT, SET, RBV, empowerment theory, and institutional theory collectively elucidate the mechanisms through which empowerment facilitates green behaviors and innovation.

Self-determination theory posits that employees are intrinsically motivated when their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are satisfied (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Consistent with this perspective, multiple studies demonstrated that empowering employees to make decisions, engage in training, and participate in environmental initiatives enhanced intrinsic motivation and green behavior. Lin et al. (2024) reported that GHRM practices positively influenced corporate sustainability and green innovation. While Sugiarto and Huruta (2023) found that empowerment directly improved employee green creativity, mediated by job satisfaction and commitment. Hu et al. (2022) observed that green creative performance was enhanced through engagement driven by green motivation, confirming SDT's assertion that competent and autonomous employees are more likely to sustain eco-friendly practices. Empowerment strategies fostering intrinsic motivation are central to achieving environmental objectives, particularly when organizations provide autonomy in green decision-making and skill development opportunities (Pham et al., 2019; S. Ren et al., 2018).

Social exchange theory emphasizes reciprocal relationships, suggesting that employees respond positively to organizational support and empowerment (Blau, 1961). Studies reviewed support this framework, demonstrating that employees who perceive organizational care and opportunities to contribute to sustainability initiatives. It is reciprocated through pro-environmental behaviors, commitment, and organizational citizenship. Meng et al. (2023) highlighted that GHRM practices enhanced green organizational citizenship behavior, mediated by green lifestyles, while Hajj Hussein and Bou Zakhem (2024) reported that organizational pride influenced by GHRM reduced turnover intentions. Farooq and Salam (2021) confirmed that cleaner production practices motivated employees, increasing their desire to impact work meaningfully. However, dissimilar findings emerged where empowerment did not fully translate into organizational-level sustainability outcomes. Al-Sabi et al. (2024) found that while green training enhanced employee environmental behavior, its effect on overall



organizational environmental performance was negligible. This divergence indicates that reciprocity alone may not guarantee organizational-level impact without institutional support.

Resource-based view frames empowered employees as strategic, inimitable resources contributing to sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Jabbour & Jabbour, 2016). Khaskhely et al. (2022) and Yang and Li (2023) showed that employees empowered through GHRM acted as agents of green innovation, directly enhancing organizational performance and competitiveness. Cao et al. (2024) reported that environmental concern and organizational commitment influenced eco-friendly behaviors indirectly, highlighting that human resources alone must be complemented by supportive structures and policies to maximize environmental outcomes. These findings reinforce RBV's notion that empowered employees constitute unique resources that, when properly developed and mobilized, create long-term value.

Empowerment theory distinguishes between structural and psychological empowerment (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Across multiple studies, structural interventions enhanced employees' capacity to engage in green behaviors (Pinzone et al., 2019; Song et al., 2023). Psychological empowerment, reflected in employees' perceived impact on environmental outcomes, further reinforced proactive engagement (Norton et al., 2014). Consistent findings from Sugiarto and Huruta (2023) and Meng et al. (2023) confirmed that combined structural and psychological empowerment drives voluntary environmental initiatives and green innovation. However, dissimilarities were found where structural empowerment alone did not always result in measurable improvements in organizational sustainability (Al-Sabi et al., 2024), suggesting that psychological readiness and intrinsic motivation are equally critical.

Institutional theory explains how external pressures coercive, normative, and mimetic shape organizational behavior (Durand & Boarini, 2016; Greenwood & Meyer, 2008). Ispiryan et al. (2024) and Kim and Wee (2020), indicated that empowered employees internalize regulatory and societal expectations, translating them into daily practices. Organizations operating in highly regulated industries implemented actual empowerment mechanisms, whereas symbolic empowerment was more prevalent in less regulated contexts. Institutional pressures interact with GHRM and GEE, influencing the effectiveness of empowerment initiatives.

## **CONCLUSION**

This systematic literature review highlights the central role of green human resource management (GHRM) in fostering green employee empowerment (GEE) and advancing organizational

sustainability. Drawing on 59 empirical studies, the review demonstrates that practices such as green recruitment and selection, targeted environmental training, performance appraisal linked to environmental goals, and employee participation in environmental decision-making meaningfully empower employees. When employees are trusted, informed, and involved, they are more likely to adopt pro-environmental behaviors, contribute to green innovation, and support long-term sustainable performance. Across the six thematic areas identified in this review, empowerment emerges as a practical mechanism through which sustainability initiatives become embedded in everyday work practices. Rather than functioning as a stand-alone concept, empowerment operates through tangible organizational actions such as delegating environmental responsibilities, encouraging employee voice, and aligning rewards with green outcomes. The findings suggest that simply introducing green policies or formal structures is insufficient. Sustainable outcomes are more likely when organizations combine these structures with efforts that build employees' motivation, confidence, and sense of ownership over environmental goals. This review also highlights important directions for future research. More longitudinal and mixed-method studies are needed to capture how green empowerment evolves over time and how it influences sustained behavioral change. Future research could examine the micro-level processes through which empowerment affects employee well-being and creativity in green contexts. Comparative studies across industries, regions, and institutional settings would help clarify how contextual factors shape the effectiveness of GHRM and GEE practices. There is scope to explore the dark side or unintended consequences of empowerment, such as role overload or green fatigue, which remain underexamined in the current literature.

## **IMPLICATION**

The findings of this review offer meaningful implications for academia, policy, and society. From an academic standpoint, the study strengthens the GHRM literature by bringing together varied insights on green employee empowerment and organizing them into six clear thematic areas that can guide future research. For policymakers, the results emphasize the importance of embedding empowerment-oriented practices into sustainability frameworks. Encouraging employee participation, environmental training, and supportive leadership can help build a capable green workforce. At the social level, the review suggests that empowered employees are more likely to adopt eco-friendly behaviors, take shared responsibility for environmental outcomes, and actively support broader sustainability initiatives.

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