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(AIJBES)[www.aijb.es.com](http://www.aijb.es.com)**GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (GHRM):  
A REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES**Nurul Hayani Abd Rahman<sup>1\*</sup>, Abidah Saad<sup>2</sup>, Shaira Ismail<sup>3</sup><sup>1</sup> Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Kedah, Malaysia

Email: nurulhayani@uitm.edu.my

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Kedah, Malaysia

Email: abidahsaad@uitm.edu.my

<sup>3</sup> Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Pulau Pinang, Malaysia

Email: sheeraz@uitm.edu.my

\* Corresponding Author

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**DOI:** 10.35631/AIJBES.724021This work is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)**Abstract:**

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has emerged as a strategic framework for integrating environmental sustainability into human resource policies and practices. The evolution of GHRM demonstrates a paradigm shift from traditional HR practices to sustainability-oriented strategies, integrating green recruitment, training, and performance management. This review aims to identify the key challenges hindering its implementation across organizational contexts. Articles were selected based on their relevance to GHRM themes, such as green recruitment, training, employee engagement, and strategic integration. The review found that although GHRM practices are gaining traction, particularly in sectors aligned with global sustainability goals, several persistent challenges remain. These include financial constraints, lack of training and expertise, resistance to change and limited integration with overall business strategy. Moreover, organizations often lack reliable metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of GHRM. These findings suggest that to advance GHRM practices, organizations must adopt interdisciplinary, context-specific strategies that align HR functions with broader sustainability objectives.

**Keywords:**

Green, Human Resource Management, Sustainability

**Introduction**

Green human resource management (GHRM) has emerged as a critical strategic approach within organizations, addressing the balance between economic performance and environmental sustainability. As a specialized subset of human resource management (HRM),

GHRM aims to embed environmental goals into human resource (HR) policies and practices, fostering eco-conscious behaviours among employees while aligning organizational processes with broader sustainability objectives (Renwick, Redman & Maguire, 2013). A study by Bangura, Ngidi and Mathews (2024) discussed how GHRM encompasses several functions, including green recruitment and selection, training and development, reward and compensation, management, and performance management, aiming to cultivate an environmentally conscious organizational culture.

The integration of GHRM with sustainability frameworks, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), has gained prominence. Researchers have explored how GHRM contributes to achieving global sustainability objectives, especially in high-impact sectors such as manufacturing, energy, and healthcare (Jabbour & de Sousa Jabbour, 2016; Rahman, Wahab & Latiff, 2024). The focus has also shifted to measuring the long-term impacts of GHRM on organizational performance, employee well-being, and environmental outcomes (Aggarwal, Dutta, Madaan, Pham & Lourens, 2023).

The evolution of GHRM marks a paradigm shift in organizational priorities, transitioning from traditional profit-driven models to sustainability-oriented frameworks. In Malaysia, a rapidly developing nation, sustainability has become a strategic priority, spurred by initiatives such as the National Green Technology Policy (NGTP). Introduced in 2009 by the Malaysian government, the NGTP aims to guide Malaysia's transition to a low-carbon and resource-efficient economy. It is a strategic roadmap to promote green technology, reduce environmental degradation, and balance economic growth with sustainability objectives. The NGTP and GHRM mutually reinforce the promotion of sustainability at both national and organizational levels. While the NGTP provides the framework for Malaysia's transition toward a sustainable economy, GHRM ensures that the workforce is equipped, motivated, and aligned with these objectives. Despite this national emphasis on sustainability, adopting GHRM practices across Malaysian organizations remains uneven, influenced by factors such as regulatory frameworks, cultural norms, and organizational capacity (Amrutha & Geetha, 2020).

Despite GHRM's recognized importance, organizations face several challenges in its practical implementation. Addressing these challenges is crucial for organizations to realize GHRM's potential to enhance their environmental performance fully. Thus, this paper aims to analyze the existing academic literature on the challenges of implementing GHRM practices.

## Literature Review

The evolution of green human resource management (GHRM) represents a critical response to growing environmental concerns and the need for organizations to adopt sustainable practices. Early studies by Wehrmeyer (1996) underscores the pivotal role of Human Resource Management (HRM) in fostering environmental sustainability within organizations. He posits that employees are central to the success or failure of environmental initiatives, emphasizing that their engagement and commitment are crucial for effective environmental management. Wehrmeyer (1996) also argues that adopting an environmentally aware approach necessitates active employee involvement, as their energy, performance, and personal commitment drive sustainable industrial development. Over time, the scope of GHRM expanded to encompass a holistic approach, integrating environmental considerations into core HR functions such as recruitment, training, and performance appraisals (Renwick et al., 2013). This evolution reflects the increasing recognition of employees as key drivers of organizational sustainability.

The expansion of GHRM was also marked by integrating green objectives into broader business strategies. Malik, Cao, Mughal, Kundi, Mughal and Ramayah (2020) studied how GHRM practices align with environmental and competitive goals, promoting green intellectual capital as a source of competitive advantage. This phase also saw an increasing emphasis on the role of GHRM in fostering organizational citizenship behaviour and a green psychological climate, as demonstrated by Sabokro, Masud and Kayedian (2021).

### ***Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) across various studies***

Scholars have defined Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) in multiple ways. Table 1 lists academic studies on GHRM over numerous years, showcasing different authors and titles.

**Table 1: GHRM Across Various Studies**

No.	Year	Authors	Title	GHRM
1	2017	Masri & Jaaron	Assessing green human resources management practices in Palestinian manufacturing context	GHRM reinforces environmental sustainability by integrating HR practices with environmental values and concerns.
2	2018	Tang, Chen, Jiang, Paillé & Jia	Green human resource management practices: scale development and validity	GHRM integrates HR functions with environmental sustainability goals through green recruitment and development.
3	2019	Yong, Yusliza & Fawehinmi	Green human resource management.	Green or environmental HRM integrates HR practices to achieve environmental sustainability and employee commitment.
4	2020	Malik, Cao, Mughal, Kundi, Mughal & Ramayah	Pathways towards Sustainability in Organizations: Empirical Evidence on the Role of Green Human Resource Management Practices and Green Intellectual Capital	GHRM practices align business strategies with environmental sustainability for competitive advantage.
5	2021	Sabokro, Masud & Kayedian	The effect of green human resources management on corporate social responsibility, green psychological climate and employees' green behaviour.	GHRM is a critical tool to achieve sustainable behaviour through HR practices that promote environmental values.
6	2022	Soviana, Zainal & Nawangsari	Green Human Resource Management Conceptual Approaches	GHRM applies environmentally friendly practices in HR

				functions to maintain sustainability.
7	2023	Wielewska, Kacprzak, Król, Czech, Zuzek, Gralak & Marks-Bielska	Green human resource management.	GHRM means taking action and shaping and promoting pro-ecological attitudes in the working environment."
8	2023	Aggarwal, Dutta, Madaan, Pham & Lourens	Impact of Green Human Resource Management on Sustainable Performance	GHRM involves green hiring, training, and practices to enhance sustainability performance.
9	2024	Alam, Ahmad & Abunar	Investigating the sustainable green marketing environment of the ready-made apparel industry	GHRM supports environmental and social sustainability through employee training in eco-friendly operations.
10	2024	Rahman, Wahab & Latiff	Socially responsible human resource management and organizational sustainability among Bangladeshi pharmaceutical manufacturing organizations: The explanatory link of voluntary green behaviour	GHRM integrates socially responsible HR practices to promote voluntary green behaviour and organizational sustainability.

The above table provides a comprehensive overview of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) research, its evolution and application across various industries. Studies such as those by Masri and Jaaron (2017) established GHRM as a key factor in aligning HR practices with environmental sustainability. Subsequent studies, including those by Tang, Chen, Jiang, Paillé and Jia (2018) and Yong, Yusliza and Fawehinmi (2019), expanded on how GHRM integrates HR functions with sustainability goals, emphasizing green recruitment, development, and employee commitment. Research by Malik et al. (2020) and Aggarwal, Dutta, Madaan, Pham and Lourens (2023) further highlighted the strategic role of GHRM in enhancing organizational performance through sustainable practices and fostering green behaviours. More recent studies by Soviana, Zainal & Nawangsari (2022), Alam, Ahmad & Abunar (2024), and Rahman et al. (2024) continued to build on these themes, focusing on the application of GHRM in diverse contexts such as the apparel and pharmaceutical industries, with an emphasis on employee training and voluntary green behaviours. These studies underscore the significance of GHRM in driving organizational sustainability and achieving competitive advantage through environmentally responsible HR practices.

Additionally, studies by Rahman et al. (2024) and Alam et al. (2024) have emphasized the integration of socially responsible HR practices and the role of GHRM in supporting organizational sustainability through employee training and engagement. The adoption of electronic human resource management (e-HRM) systems, as explored by Miah, Rahman,

Biswas, Szabó-Szentgróti and Walter (2024), represents a significant advancement, enabling organizations to leverage digital tools for implementing green HR practices more efficiently. e-HRM facilitates the integration of sustainability into HR functions by streamlining processes such as recruitment, training, and performance management, thereby reducing paper usage and promoting eco-friendly practices. While specific studies on e-HRM's role in green HR practices are limited, related research highlights the potential of digital HR tools in supporting environmental sustainability.

### Challenges of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM)

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has emerged as a critical area of focus within Human Resource Management (HRM), with organizations increasingly striving to adopt sustainable practices that minimize their environmental impact. However, despite the growing interest in GHRM, several challenges hinder its effective implementation. As depicted in Figure 1, six key challenges must be addressed for organizations to enhance their environmental performance through effective GHRM practices. Addressing these challenges is crucial for organizations to fully leverage the potential of GHRM in achieving both environmental sustainability and long-term organizational success.

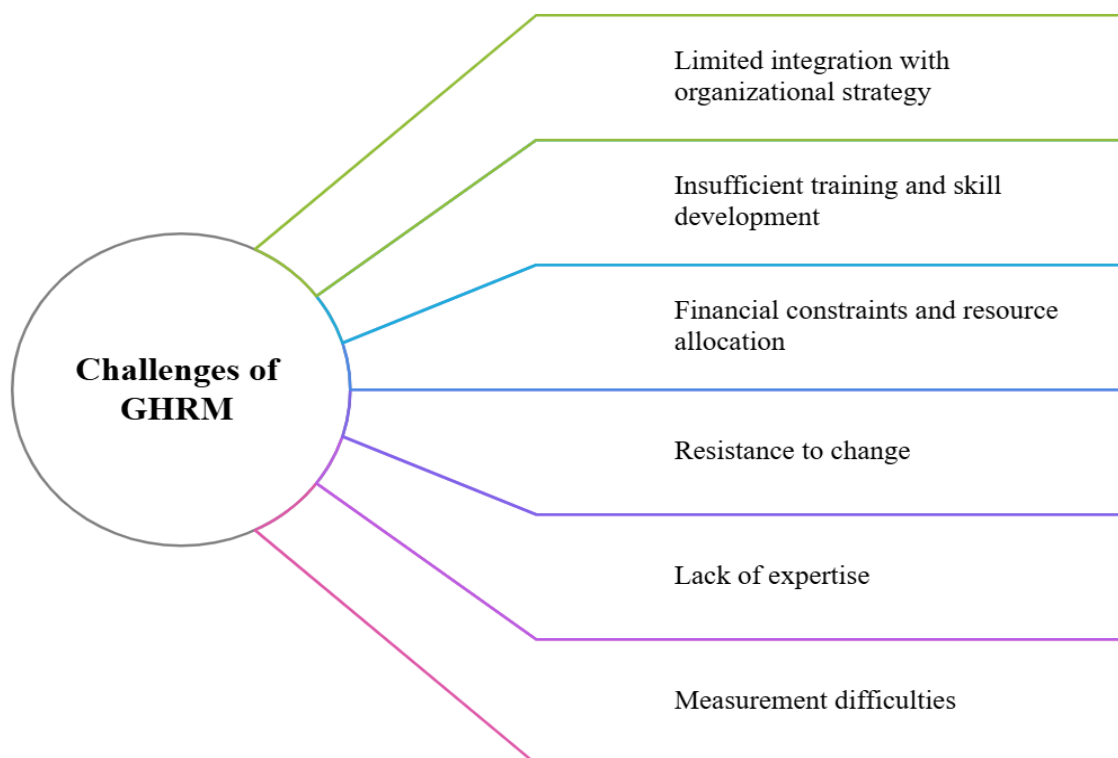


Figure 1: GHRM Challenges

#### *Limited Integration With Organizational Strategy*

Integrating Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) with overall business strategy is a critical challenge organizations face in implementing effective green human resource practices. Many organizations treat GHRM as a separate or supplementary function rather than embedding it into their core sustainability goals. This disconnect prevents GHRM from fully contributing to the broader business strategy and hampers its potential impact on organizational



sustainability. When GHRM is not strategically aligned, its effect remains isolated, preventing the organization from leveraging green practices to drive systemic change. This alignment is critical for fostering a sustainable organizational culture and maximizing the benefits of GHRM. Furthermore, integrating GHRM with corporate strategies can increase operational efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance employee engagement in sustainability efforts (Malik et al., 2020; Alam et al., 2024). To overcome this challenge, organizations must adopt a more holistic approach where GHRM is considered an integral part of the sustainability strategy, ensuring that HR functions contribute to achieving long-term environmental and business performance goals (Malik et al., 2020).

### ***Insufficient Training And Skill Development***

Organizations must invest in training HR professionals to develop the necessary knowledge and skills to implement GHRM effectively. A study by Bangura et al. (2024) emphasizes that HR professionals often lack essential environmental management training, making it difficult to drive sustainability initiatives effectively. The absence of targeted training programs and development opportunities for GHRM restricts the full adoption of sustainable HR practices. The lack of proper training negatively affects GHRM implementations in organizations (Birbisa & Worku, 2022). Also, it limits the ability to integrate environmental sustainability into HR functions such as recruitment, development, and performance management. HR professionals need to develop strategic thinking skills, particularly in aligning HR practices with corporate sustainability objectives. Leadership training is also necessary to drive organizational change and engage employees in sustainability initiatives (Aggarwal et al., 2023). GHRM requires HR leaders who can advocate for sustainability within the organization and influence top management to prioritize green initiatives.

In addition, GHRM practices must be designed to involve and motivate all employees, fostering a culture of sustainability throughout the organization. Research by Soviana et al. (2022) highlights the importance of creating inclusive green HR practices that encourage broader participation in sustainability efforts. Engaging employees at all levels is essential for the long-term success of GHRM and embedding sustainable practices within the organizational culture (Aggarwal et al., 2023).

### ***Financial Constraints and Resource Allocation***

Financial constraints and resource allocation are significant challenges to successfully implementing Green Human Resource Management (GHRM). Many organizations, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), face budgetary limitations that hinder their ability to invest in green HR initiatives, such as training, sustainable recruitment practices, and the development of eco-friendly organizational policies. The upfront costs of adopting sustainable HR practices, such as upgrading facilities or implementing green technologies, can be prohibitive, leading organizations to deprioritize GHRM initiatives in favour of more immediate financial needs (Malik et al., 2020). The financial barrier also limits the capacity of HR departments to design and execute comprehensive training programs that equip employees with the necessary skills to support green initiatives. Furthermore, the absence of allocated resources can impede the measurement and evaluation of GHRM effectiveness, as organizations may not have the tools to track the environmental and financial impacts of green HR practices (Aggarwal et al., 2023). Addressing these financial constraints requires organizations to secure funding or reallocate resources to invest in long-term sustainability initiatives, emphasizing the strategic importance of GHRM for organizational success.

### ***Resistance to Change***

Resistance to adopting Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices is a persistent challenge within organizations, particularly in the context of sustainability initiatives. Employees often perceive green HR practices as additional tasks or workload, which can lead to disengagement or reluctance to participate. Similarly, managers may be concerned about the time, effort, and costs of adopting environmentally friendly practices. Organizational resistance to change, especially in adopting sustainability practices, is widespread. A study by Malik et al. (2020) found that cultural resistance to change in organizations often stems from a lack of understanding of the long-term benefits of GHRM, which leads to hesitation in adopting green practices. Overcoming this resistance requires effective change management strategies, clear communication of the benefits of GHRM, and the involvement of employees at all levels in the decision-making process (Aggarwal et al., 2023). Involving employees early and providing incentives for participation can help reduce resistance and ensure a smoother transition to sustainable HR practices.

### ***Lack of Expertise***

Implementing GHRM requires specialized knowledge in both HR and environmental management. Many HR professionals face difficulty integrating sustainability into their HR policies, mainly due to a lack of specialized knowledge in environmental management. The scarcity of professionals with this dual expertise poses a significant barrier to successfully adopting green HR practices (Bangura et al., 2024). This dual expertise is crucial for organizations to effectively design, implement, and monitor green HR practices aligned with environmental sustainability goals. However, there is a scarcity of well-versed HR professionals in both areas. This knowledge gap creates significant challenges in ensuring that GHRM practices are implemented correctly and lead to meaningful environmental outcomes.

### ***Measurement Difficulties***

Quantifying the impact of GHRM initiatives on environmental performance and organizational outcomes is complex. The absence of standardized metrics makes it challenging to assess the effectiveness of green HR practices, impeding continuous improvement efforts (Bangura et al., 2024). Quantifying GHRM initiatives' impact on environmental performance and organizational outcomes is a complex task. One of the primary challenges organizations face is the absence of standardized metrics and frameworks for measuring the success of green HR practices. Without clear metrics, organizations cannot track and evaluate the outcomes of their green initiatives, making it difficult to assess their effectiveness. Bangura et al. (2024) noted that many companies rely on qualitative assessments rather than quantitative data, which leads to inconsistent reporting and hinders continuous improvement efforts. This issue of standardized measurement tools impedes the comparability of GHRM performance across different industries or organizations.

### ***Methods and Data***

This review incorporated a range of academic articles to deepen the understanding of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices within organizations. To achieve this, existing literature was analyzed, particularly the challenges of implementing GHRM. Google Scholar was a key resource in sourcing relevant academic materials due to its broad accessibility and vast repository of scholarly content. It provides access to an extensive selection of freely available full-text articles, making it especially beneficial for researchers without subscriptions to paid academic databases. Although not all content is open access, the platform often links to free versions or institutional repositories. It does have limitations,

particularly regarding the completeness and quality control of the indexed sources. Researchers should use it alongside other specialized databases for comprehensive literature reviews in the future. Only sources directly relevant to GHRM's central theme were selected for analysis, while unrelated articles were excluded to maintain the review's focus.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this review has critically examined the literature on Green Human Resource Management (GHRM), specifically focusing on the challenges associated with its implementation in organizational settings. The impact of GHRM on organizational outcomes is multifaceted. By fostering eco-conscious behaviours among employees, organizations can significantly reduce resource consumption, enhance innovation in green technologies, and improve compliance with environmental policies (Ren, Tang & Jackson, 2018). The scope of GHRM expanded to include a broader range of HR functions. Jabbour and de Sousa Jabbour (2016) highlighted the link between GHRM and green supply chain management, demonstrating how HR practices could drive sustainability across organizational boundaries. By utilizing accessible academic databases such as Google Scholar, a diverse range of peer-reviewed sources was gathered to support the analysis. The review highlighted key challenges, including insufficient training, resistance to change, financial constraints, and the lack of integration with broader business strategies. These challenges underscore the need for organizations to invest in capacity-building, foster inclusive engagement, and develop structured frameworks to implement GHRM effectively. The selective inclusion of relevant literature ensured that the analysis remained focused and aligned with the core objectives of the review, offering a nuanced understanding of the evolving role of GHRM in promoting sustainable organizational practices. Future research should examine how emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), electronic Human Resource Management (e-HRM) systems, and data analytics can support or transform the implementation of GHRM practices.

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