

# Sustainability of the society through green human resources management practices: A proposed model

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study evaluates and fills this knowledge gap by providing empirical evidence of the relationship between green HRM practices and environmental performance based on the resource-based view, dynamic capabilities theory, and triple bottom line theory.

**Research Methodology:** A detailed review of the empirical and conceptual articles related to this topic was conducted. An eclectic analysis and synthesis of evidence guided the development and presentation of the proposed framework.

**Results:** A review of relevant studies revealed that GHRM practices positively determine society's sustainability through the adoption of environmental practices. Green human resource management practices have also been proposed to have a direct link to society's sustainability and an indirect link mediated by environmental practices.

This study is limited to green human resource management practices, environmental practices, and the sustainability of society.

**Contribution:** This study provides a valid mechanism and useful insights for corporate organizations, entrepreneurs, researchers/scholars, policy makers, community leaders, and government, among others, to facilitate the use of human resources (HRM) practices as a means for improving environmental practices and sustainability of society.

**Keywords:** *GHRM, environmental practices, sustainability*

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## 1. Introduction

Globally, the concern for a clean sustainable environment and society compels organizations to adopt green HRM practices, that is, the HRM aspects of green management, to promote employees' pro-environmental behavior in the workplace (Saeed et al., 2019). Worldwide, environmental problems constitute a serious concern to decision makers and managers, in which stakeholders in and around the world are faced with the challenges of protecting and preserving the environment as a result of the devastation caused by human and business activities.

The onus is on managers, entrepreneurs, corporate organizations, and individuals to carry out their activities or schedules today in a manner that will not compromise the desire of our upcoming generation abilities and desires to meet their own needs. In today's world, protecting and preserving the environment or society should be a major priority of policy makers, community leaders, entrepreneurs, and top managers in corporate business organization. In protecting and preserving the environment, firms or corporate business organizations must bring in the concept of "green human resources management practices" or "green business" into the business model and strategy.

Corporate business organization plays an important role in the development of societies and communities, as well the role of human resources management (Kusa, Wapmuk, & Yari, 2021) in corporate business organization. However, despite the role that corporate business organizations play in ensuring a cleaner environment, environmental practices, and welfare of the society, the challenges of the environment are even more increasing on a daily basis, and in particular pertaining to manufacturing organizations, how to manage the environment and business simultaneously is an issue for managers, captains of industries, entrepreneurs, and policy makers. Environmental problems are even more catastrophic in the manufacturing sector as a result of the huge amount of waste material released into the environment. As human activities of companies contributed significantly to environmental degradation (Mondal, Akter, Moni, & Polas, 2023; Udodiugwu, 2024). The onus is on corporate business organizations to be responsible for the environment and society in which they conduct their business activities.

Today, managers, entrepreneurs, firms, and corporate business organizations are engaging in increasingly stiff competition that requires managers to continually find new ways to optimize human resources to implement policies and practices and boost sustainable performance (Mousa & Othman, 2020). Creating a balance between the profit maximization interest of a firm or business and the economic development of a country is considered a challenge that obliges firms or business organizations to implement business policies and strategies that are environmentally friendly, so as to improve a firm's economic interest maximization and social and environmental performance. Mousa and Othman (2020) further state that a rapid increase in pollution from industrial practices, accompanied by a decline in natural resources, has driven governments, government associations, environmental agencies, competitors, community leaders, policymakers, customers, employees, society as a whole, and stakeholders to push firms and business corporations to adopt green practices on a larger scale. Implementing such practices will lead to operational development, economic gain, and improvement of organizations' environmental performance, firms' competitive advantage, and society's welfare in general.

In today's world, decision makers are shifting away from traditional human resources management practices to embrace an alternative management called 'green human resources management practices' or 'green business' for sustainable environmental performance. Hence, the term "green" was used. Arguably, HR is a powerful point for facilitating green and sustainable initiatives, where environmental sustainability may be at the nucleus and focus of emergent GHRM research studies (Jabbour et al., as cited in Mousa and Othman (2020)).

Thus, in transforming our environment and making society a better place to live, human resource management practices are pivotal. As such, leading organizations in developed countries have implemented green practices to create awareness of environmental sustainability (Zaid, Bon, & Jaaron, 2018). The human resource (HR) function plays a very important role in deciding which conservation practices should be applied and implemented in every aspect and stage of business organization, which is a continuous process and not a one-off activity (Yusoff, Nejati, Kee, & Amran, 2020). With the high competition and ever-changing environmental conditions around the world, corporate business organizations' ability to change directions and reconfigure strategically is essential to their success in achieving environmental performance and competitive advantages in an evolving, changing, and complex environment. In other words, we propose that corporate business organizations, managers, entrepreneurs, and the Captain of industries need to embrace green human resource management practices (green HRM) into their business activities, strategies, and models in today's evolving complex environment to remain competitive and positively impact the environment and society in which they conduct their business activities. Recent empirical evidence supports the contention that green HRM practices drives both firm and environmental performance (Molla, Ibrahim, & Ishak, 2019; Sakka, 2018; Yusoff et al., 2020).

It is generally believed that green HRM practices are the best strategy for programmed environmental performance, and green HRM practices provide a fundamental structure that allows organizations to better govern their environmental impacts (Sudin, 2011). Therefore, it is necessary for corporate

business organizations to identify green human resource management practices that contribute to environmental performance.

Broadly speaking, developing countries do not fully adopt green practices in all functional areas; in fact, few departments and organizations adopt green practices (Gupta, 2018). These developing countries generally have poor economic performance for various reasons such as lagging political reforms, underdeveloped financial markets, dominant and underperforming public sectors, and extensive trade restrictions. However, the widespread lack of political stability in these countries has led to war, social disruption, and mass migration (Mousa & Othman, 2020).

Although the literature on GHRM has been extended, published studies have paid little attention to GHRM and its contribution to employee commitment towards the environment, especially the interactions of GHRM practices via AEP (Pham et al., 2019). From the literature review, it was established that green human resource management practices have attracted interest among researchers. Pham et al. (2019) found strong positive relationship between Green Human Resources Management and employee is commitment towards the environment. Studies have also found positive relationships between green human resource management and environmental performance (Guerci, Longoni, & Luzzini, 2016; Rawashdeh, 2018), goal achievement (Shaban, 2019), environmental sustainability (Ahuja, 2015; Chowdhury, Sanju, & Asaduzzaman, 2017; Sharma & Gupta, 2015), community development (Jermsittiparsert, Siam, Issa, Ahmed, & Pahi, 2019), and return on assets and earnings per share (Ishola & Ishola, 2019). These consistent positive relationships in the literature have influenced the decision to undertake this study to address this research gap by introducing a mediator in the relationship.

The major objective of this study is to evaluate and fill this knowledge gap by providing empirical evidence of the relationship between green HRM practices (recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, and compensation) and the sustainability of societies based on theory and empirical reviews. Specifically, the study seeks to evaluate the impact of green human resources management practices on environmental practices, the impact of environmental practices on the sustainability of society, the impact of green human resources management practices on the sustainability of society, and the role of environmental practices in mediating the relationship between green human resource management practices and the sustainability of society. To achieve the objectives of the study, it was guided by a review of related empirical studies that also contribute to the literature on green human resource management practices (GHRM) and sustainability literature by suggesting a framework for understanding the complex relationship between green human resource management practices and the sustainability of societies, mediated by the adoption of environmental practices in a complex environment.

The sections that follow show, a detailed literature review of what constitutes green human resources management practices, three theoretical foundations on which the study depends, the study methodology, a framework of green human resources management practices and sustainability of the societies mediated by the adoption of environmental practices based on evidences in literature, empirical studies, summary, practical contributions/implication, suggestion/recommendation, limitation and direction for future studies.

## **2. Literature review**

### ***2.1 Concept of Green Human Resources Management***

The term HRM has been commonly used in organizations that focus on the optimization of the workforce and condition performance. Human resource management practices directly influence all aspects of strategic decision-making. For example, a strategic decision to conduct a systematic examination of the human resource requirements to ensure that the appropriate number of personnel with the required capabilities is on hand when needed (Adula, Kant, & Birbirs, 2022), and the strategic decision to enhance the environment and society. In influencing the strategic decision-making process towards enhancing the environment and society, managers must bring in the concepts of GHRM and AEP to have a smooth sail in a turbulent environment. Greening human resource management practices

can improve organizational performance, which has a considerable impact on broader corporate and strategic issues of human resource practices and policies. It is important to include greener activities in every step of an organization's HRM activities, because green HRM practices support the implementation and maintenance of environmental management systems in organizations to achieve better environmental performance.

Mandip (2012) defined the concept of 'green human resources management' as the process of using every employee touch point or interface to advocate sustainable practices and raise employee awareness and commitment to sustainability issues. It entails taking environmentally friendly HR approaches resulting in cost reduction, improving employee retention and performance, and greater efficiencies, which also help organizations to reduce employee carbon footprints by the likes of electronic filing, car-sharing, job-sharing, teleconferencing, virtual interviews, recycling, telecommuting, online training, and energy-efficient office spaces amongst other things.

Green HRM is defined by Renwick, Redman, and Maguire (2013) as HRM activities, which enhance positive environmental outcomes, while Yusoff et al. (2020) defines green HRM as the use of policies, philosophies and practices of HR (recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management and appraisal and compensation) that promote the use of sustainable business and environmental sustainability.

Opatha and Hewapathirana (2019) in their work defined GHRM "as a concept that deals with rethinking the basic concepts of HRM, its objectives, functions, processes, activities, and strategies in an environmentally friendly manner in order to accommodate the needs of ecological sustainability." They further summarized GHRM as a set of policies, practices, and systems that make employees of the organization go green for the benefit of the individual, society, the natural environment, and business. Therefore, building on the definitions of Opatha and Hewapathirana, we can define and re-rhapsodizes GHRM to mean "the used of the basic well-known concepts of HRM, its policies, practices, systems, objectives, functions, processes, activities, and strategies in an environmentally friendly manner that is mutually beneficial to the individual, the business organization, the natural environment, and the society at large.

GHRM practices contribute to the quality of the organization internally and externally, boost employees' well-being, reduce expenditure, corporate social responsibility, talent management, competition benefits, establish a green image of the employer, improve the company's image as a potential marketing strategy, and improve the relationship with multiple stakeholders such as customers, suppliers, vendors, shareholders, government agencies, employees, and the media (Zaid et al., 2018). GHRM can encourage employees' commitment and involvement in environmental practices, which can increase their sense of belonging and pride, motivating them to work harder. These environmentally friendly practices can therefore help a firm develop a good reputation, reduce the pressure from stakeholders, and benefit future generations in the long run (Arulrajah, Opatha, & Nawaratne, 2015; Tang, Chen, Jiang, Paillé, & Jia, 2018). Scholars have used GHRM practices as antecedents or independent variables for sustainable performance (Mousa & Othman, 2020; Yusoff et al., 2020), performance optimization (Zaid et al., 2018), and employee pro-environmental behavior (Saeed et al., 2019).

Scholars have identified five dimensions of green human resource management practices: green recruitment and selection, green training and development, green performance management and appraisal, green pay and reward, and green involvement (Mousa & Othman, 2020; Saeed et al., 2019; Tang et al., 2018).

### *2.1.1 Green recruitment and selection*

Green recruitment and selection, based on previous studies (Mousa & Othman, 2020; Tang et al., 2018), simply refers to an organizational process of identifying, attracting, and selecting candidates with the necessary skills, knowledge, capacity, and abilities of commitment and consciousness towards environmental issues, and other certain characteristics that match with the demand for job vacancies in

total compliances with the organizational green recruitment policies in order to further organizational objectives. An organization must do all it can get the right people with the right skills, knowledge, abilities, and characteristics that will help further the organization 'sobjective efficiently and effectively in a changing world, because getting people according to Nmadu (2012) is a function of what they think of the organization.

### *2.1.2 Green Training and development*

Green training and development is an organizational effort or system of activities deliberately and consciously designed to change employees' behavior and motivate them to learn environmental protection skills and pay attention to environmental issues and other necessary conditions in accomplishing organizational objectives in acceptable standards.

The important essence of green training and development is to learn and create intellectual capital, create employees' green awareness, and facilitate green knowledge and skills in environmental issues to enhance both employees and organizational performance. According to Saeed et al. (2019), green training should be provided along with education programs, including but not limited to basic and advanced skills, to all members of the organization, not only those linked to environmental departments. Nmadu (2012) in her book defined training as a means of planned organizational effort to facilitate employees' learning of job-related competencies.

Employees should be encouraged to know more about the importance of the environment to the organization and how organizational activities affect the environment by improving it for mutual benefits. This helps employees understand the impact of organizational activities on the environment and makes them more sensitive to environmental management, protection, and preservation. Implementing corporate environmental practices such as training and developing employees to take care of the natural environment, increasing employees' environmental awareness, and allowing them to enhance their skills, knowledge, capabilities, and self-efficacy towards addressing environmental issues in an effective and efficient manner will help employees adopt responsible environmental behavior and attitudes that will enable them to solve complex environmental issues (Amjad et al., 2021; Dingra & Padmavathy, 2019; Gilal, Ashraf, Gilal, Gilal, & Channa, 2019; Saeed et al., 2019).

### *2.1.3 Green performance management and appraisal*

Green performance management and appraisal is a planned systematic system designed to evaluate and communicate the activities of employees' performance on the job in the process of environmental management and to establish a plan for employee improvement (Pham et al., 2019; Saeed et al., 2019). Managers and employees should be evaluated on green outcomes to stress their role in environmental practices to make them more accountable to the environment and society. Different organizations have different attributes and objectives; hence, each organization, based on its attributes and objectives, should design a wholesome green performance appraisal that is most effective and efficient by identifying a systematic method of implementing and assessing green performance appraisal that best works for them. Adopting green performance management standards according to Saeed et al. (2019) is necessary for several types of organizations to create green performance indicators to establish a series of green criteria for all members of the organization in performance appraisals, covering topics such as environmental incidents, environmental responsibilities, reduction of carbon emissions, and communication of environmental concerns and policies. Green appraisal is the most important aspect of performance management, because it affects the process and effectiveness of subsequent rewards and compensation.

Generally, performance management systems focus on discovering how productive the employee is and whether he or she satisfactorily performs now or more effectively in the future for mutual benefit of the employee, the organization, and society at large (Nmadu, 2012).

### *2.1.4 Green pay and reward*

In line with a strategic approach to reward management, green rewards and compensation or pay are a system of financial and nonfinancial rewards aimed at attracting, retaining, and motivating employees

to contribute to environmental goals (Pham et al., 2019). Employees are more motivated through financial (e.g., green travel benefits, green tax, and green rewards) and nonfinancial rewards of green pay and reward, such as recognition and praise. Financial and nonfinancial green rewards are more powerful measures of aligning employees' performance with the firm's goals than other practices in the HRM system. Green travel benefits include rewards for employees' transport and travel, which can be guided to reduce carbon footprints and increase awareness of environmental protection. Green tax incentives include exemptions to promote the use of bicycles and a less-polluting car fleet. Financial incentives such as these have been introduced by U.K. companies and have a major effect on employees' willingness to protect the environment (Haque, as cited in Saeed et al. (2019)). Green recognition rewards lead to feelings of pride among colleagues and encourage environmental behaviors more effectively.

#### *2.1.5 Green involvement*

Green involvement is an organization's ability to provide employees with opportunities to participate in environmental management practices, which stimulates them to support the prevention of pollution and identify environmental opportunities (Renwick et al., 2013). This is crucial for improving the performance of environmental management systems, such as reducing waste and pollution in the workplace and making full use of resources (Saeed et al., 2019). Encouraging green involvement involves providing employees with opportunities to engage in proactive quality improvement and problem-solving techniques for environmental and societal issues effectively and efficiently in a complex environment.

### **2.2 Concept of Environmental Practices as A Mediator**

Environmental practices relate to organizational initiatives to meet and exceed societal expectations, that is, the natural environment, in a manner that goes beyond mere compliance with rules and regulations. It encompasses environmental effects of organizational processes, products, and resource consumption in a manner that best fit with legal environmental requirements (Singh, Del Giudice, Chierici, & Graziano, 2020).

Based on the aforementioned discussion, it is thought that the importance of environmental practices is a good opportunity to enhance the competitiveness of organizations in a **win-win** situation because incorporating environmental performance issues with business strategy and innovating the process by a green concept are becoming strategic prospects for organizations (Dangelico and Pujari, as cited in Yusoff et al. (2020)). Organizations must be concerned about the environment (Seneviratne & Kalpani, 2020) because they operate and make profits. Some stakeholders believe that environmentally concerned organizations are costly, whereas others believe that consumers and capital markets appreciate green organizations; hence, environmental performance should increase business performance (Dingra & Padmavathy, 2019; Gilal et al., 2019; Molla et al., 2019; Paillé, Valéau, & Renwick, 2020; Sakka, 2018; Yusoff et al., 2020). Moreover, with the increase in social demand for the adoption of environmental practices (AEP), business organizations are applying environmental practices to be competitive, and the number of organizations applying environmental practices is increasing on a daily basis. The importance of AEP to organizations, according to scholars (Yusoff et al., 2020), is as follows: more well-organized business practices, lower operational costs, increased image, compliance with regulations, and improved competitiveness.

Clair, Milliman, and Whelan (1996) argued that there are numerous methods that can be used to measure environmental performance, such as adopting corporate-wide metrics for measuring resource usage, acquisition, and waste; performing information systems to track resource movements; and conducting field audits as a mechanism for employees to identify problems while gaining information and feedback about the environmental performance of the organization. In addition, a set of indicators, such as low environmental emissions, pollution prevention, waste minimization, and recycling activities, can be used as environmental performance indicators (Lober, 1996). On the other hand, according to del Brio, Fernández, and Junquera (2007), environmental performance can be improved by the execution of EMS, such as ISO 14001 certification, a tool that requires strong interaction between HRM and environmental management.

Effective implementation of environmental practices can only be achieved when the organization has the right people with the right skills and capabilities (Daily and Huang, 2001). Therefore, HR practices must align with the strategic business goals. Hence, organizations are able to shape the skills, behavior, and attitudes of the individual, as well as influence them to execute their work and accomplish the organization's goals (Collins & Clark, 2003). In addition, employee involvement in environmental performance programs is of great importance, and as mentioned by Harvey, Bosco, and Emanuele (2010), employees are more attracted to working with organizations concerned about environmental issues and find greater job satisfaction (Chan & Hawkins, 2010).

Environmental practices have been widely used by researchers and scholars as dependent variables (Ahuja, 2015; Guerci et al., 2016; Mashala, 2018; Pham et al., 2019; Rawashdeh, 2018; Sharma & Gupta, 2015) and have been introduced as a mediating variable in our study. The next section discusses the theoretical foundation that this study hinges on: the resource-based view, dynamic capabilities theory, and triple bottom line theory.

### **2.3 Theoretical Foundation**

The theoretical framework of this study research is formulated around Resources based view, Dynamic capabilities theory and Triple bottom line theory

**Resource-based view:** This theory was developed by Barney. B in 1991. The theory explains that organizations compete against others based on their resources and capabilities. The RBV is a theory that explains how an organization can best use its resources to exploit opportunities and neutralize threats to gain competitive advantage. Linking RBV to GHRM, we consider leadership and employees as critical and important resources, similar to any other firm's resources, and the foremost aim of green human resource management (GHRM) practices is to develop, motivate, and provide opportunities for employees to exhibit superior job behaviors for the firm's sustained competitive advantage and superior performance (Boxall and Steeneveld, as cited in Singh et al. (2020). We argue that human resources as critical resources of an organization satisfy the above criteria of the RBV for generating and supporting higher performance, adoption of environmental practices, sustainability of the society, community development, and competitive advantage, as human capital is normally embedded in a firm's multifaceted social systems that make human resources take on organization-specific features and useful enough for a particular firm than for rivals in the markets (Singh et al., 2020).

The theory contends that an organization's internal resources (which can be grouped into three all-encompassing categories: physical, human, and organizational resources) are more important for the firm than external factors in achieving and sustaining competitive advantages. Organizations, firms, managers, and entrepreneurs can use these three resources to plan, implement, and execute GHRM practices, policies, and strategies in a changing environment. Human's resources include all employees, training, experience, intelligence, knowledge, skills, abilities, and organizational resources, including firm structure, planning processes, information systems, patents, trademarks, copyrights, and databases. From the resource-based perspective, human resources are important factors in firms' competitive advantage due to their rarity, value, non-repeatability, and exclusiveness (J. Barney, 1991; J. B. Barney, 2001) Wright, Dunford and Snell work cited in Tang et al. (2018). An organization can, therefore, use human resources to create environmental practices that will help achieve organizational performance. From the explanation above, the main (underpinned) theory for this study is the resources based view.

**Dynamic capabilities theory:** This theory was developed by Teece. This theory examines how firms integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external firm-specific competencies into new competencies that match their turbulent environments (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997). The aim of this theory is to understand how firms use dynamic capabilities to create and sustain a competitive advantage over other firms by responding to and creating environmental changes (Teece, 2007). An organization is said to have dynamic capabilities when it can effectively and efficiently integrate, build, and reconfigure its internal and external capabilities in response to its evolving complex environment. Dynamic capabilities theory is a build-up of resource-based theory to incorporate the important external resources for the organization to address complex environmental challenges. The theory can be best

used in this study by organizations to adopt and incorporate environmental practices into their business strategies and practices to achieve their objectives and sustainability. This serves as a supporting theory in the study of resource-based views.

**Triple bottom-line theory:** This theory was developed by John Elkington in 1994. The theory posits that instead of one bottom line, there should be three: profit, people, and the planet (environment). The theory holds that if a firm looks at profits or wealth maximization only, ignoring people (critical to the organization) and the environment, it cannot account for the full cost of doing business. Hence, for any firm to account for the full cost of doing business, it must take into account profit, people, and the environment. The triple bottom line (TBL) is a theory that recommends that companies commit to focus on social and environmental concerns just as they do on profit maximization because business, in the words of Islam, Islam, Pervez, and Nabi (2019), most commit to the people, society, environment, and the earth. Managers should not only focus on the bottom-line (profit) objective but should also assume more responsibilities to society and the environment (Yeye & Egbunike, 2023). TBL seeks to gauge a corporation's level of commitment to corporate social responsibility and its impact on the environment in which it conducts business activities. In this theory, an organization is held responsible for both the negative and positive impacts of its activities on the environment and society. The theory can be used by organizations, managers, entrepreneurs, captains of industries, and policymakers to plan and implement green management strategies and policies by adopting environmental practices into its business model to make society a better place for the upcoming generation and the sustainability of the society as they continuously practice GHRM and environmental practices.

This model is appropriate for this study because it creates a balance between the profit maximization interest of the firm, environment, and welfare of society. This serves as a co-supporting theory for the theory of the resource-based view and dynamic capabilities theory.

### 3. Methodology

The methodology adopted in this study was a review of articles related to the topic under consideration. A total of 52 articles were reviewed and used for the study, consisting of 29 empirical articles, 17 conceptual reviews, three conference proceedings, one thesis, and two textbooks. The articles and materials sourced and reviewed for the study were limited to high-impact journals and others published under the following resources: Goodwoodpub, Academy of Management, Taylor and Francis, JSTOR, Emerald, Wiley, Elsevier, Sagepub, Online DB, Annual Reviews, MDPI, Semantic scholars, and Resresearchgate. The keywords for the search were GHRM, Green human resource management practices, environmental practices, environmental protection, environmental performance, employees' pro-environmental behavior, sustainability of society, environmental commitment, green management, resource-based view, triple bottom line, and dynamic capability theory, among others. The timeframe of the articles that were reviewed and included in this study was 1991-2023. The year 2011-2023 was used as the reference point (Opatha & Hewapathirana, 2019; Yusoff et al., 2020) for the conceptualization and theorization of green human resource management (GHRM) practices. In all, 7 representing 13 percent of the articles reviewed covered 2023, 39 representing 75 percent of the articles reviewed covering the year 2011-to-2020, 7 representing 13 percent covered 2001-2010, while 4 percent covered the period 1991-2000. Therefore, 21 percent of the reviewed articles covered the pre 2011-2020 period, while 4 percent covered post 2011-2020 thus, making a total of 100 percent. Therefore, it can be said that the articles reviewed and used for the study were relatively widespread within the period under review.

### 4. Results and discussions

#### 4.1 Green Human Resource Management Practices and Sustainability of The Society

This section is based on the literature reviewed on Green Human resource management (GHRM) practices and proposes a conceptual framework model to investigate the relationship between GHRM practices and the sustainability of the society mediated by environmental practices (see Figure 1). A systematic analysis of the findings of the conceptual, literature, and theoretical reviews informed the development of the proposed conceptual framework, as presented in Figure 1 below.



The model shows the relationship between GHRM practices and sustainability of society, mediated by the adoption of environmental practices.

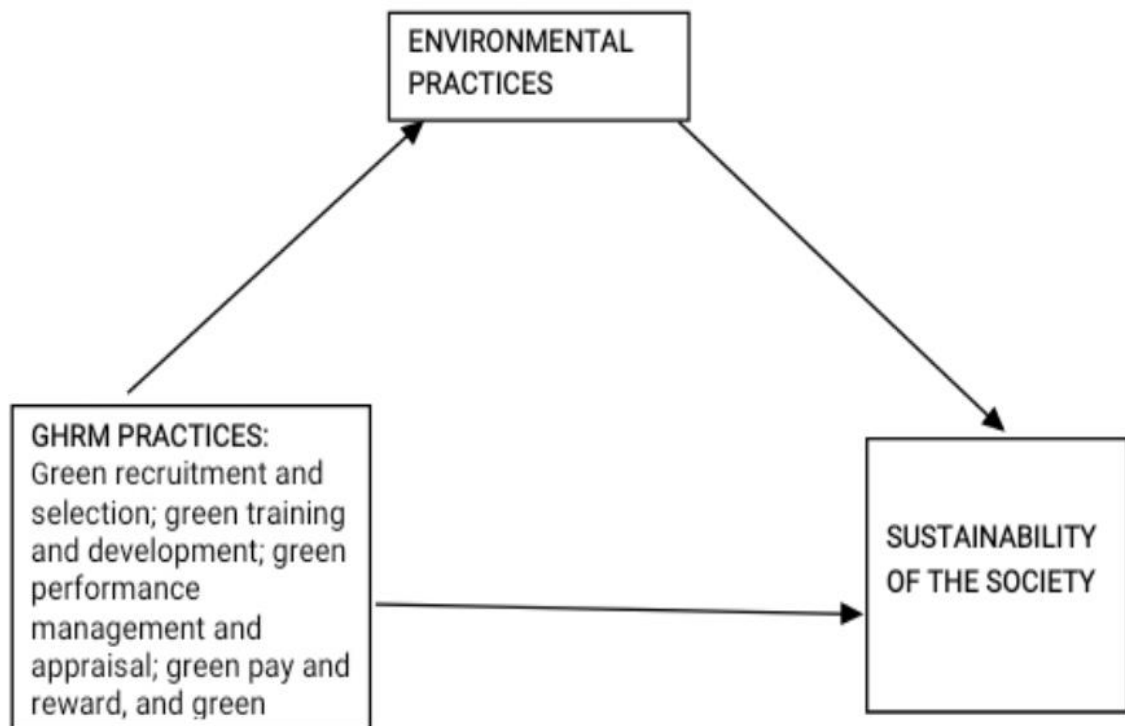


Figure 1. Proposed Model  
Source: Nson (2022)

The reason for introducing a mediator in the relationship is that the findings from the reviewed literature show a consistently positive relationship. From this review, it was established that green human resource management practices have attracted interest among researchers. Pham et al. (2019) found strong positive relationship between Green Human Resources Management and employees' commitment towards the environment. Studies have also found a positive relationship between green human resource management and environmental performance (Guerci et al., 2016; Rawashdeh, 2018), goal achievement (Shaban, 2019), environmental sustainability (Ahuja, 2015; Chowdhury et al., 2017; Sharma & Gupta, 2015), and community development (Jermsittiparsert et al., 2019), among others, which has provided support for the conceptual framework developed and presented.

Environment-friendly HR initiatives result in greater efficiency, lower cost, and better employee engagement and retention, which in turn helps build competitive advantage by reducing carbon footprints, preserving natural resources, and exploring alternate resources (Nijhawan, 2014).

Although the influence of green human resource management practices on environmental performance is well documented, there is a paucity of empirical studies on green human resource management practices on the sustainability of society mediated by the adoption of environmental practices. Therefore, further investigation is required. Chowdhury et al. (2017) called for further investigation on areas like stakeholders' interest, general social welfare and environmental concern, while Shaban (2019) also called for more investigation and testing GHRM, EM (environment management)' and other dimensions related to the GHRM practices in other sectors. The search also revealed a dearth of literature on the mediating effect of environmental practices between GHRM and a sustainable society.

The above conceptual framework is supported by the natural resource-based view as an underpinning theory, while the triple bottom-line theory was used in this study to support environmental practices.

Resource-based view theory suggests that an organization can gain competitive advantages from the natural environment. Environmental activities can produce strategic resources that are difficult to imitate. The proposed model can be useful for ensuring the sustainability of society by the obligation of organizational use of green human resource management practices and proper adoption of environmental practices that will interact by giving feedback to each other in the model and grow up strategically for the benefit of all, including society.

#### *4.1.1 Green human resources management practices, and sustainability of the society: Proposed direct link*

Green human resources management practices have been found to significantly influence the sustainability of society (Ahuja, 2015; Chowdhury et al., 2017; Sharma & Gupta, 2015) and community development (Jermsittiparsert et al., 2019). Thus:

**H1** There is a positive relationship between green human resource management practices and society's sustainability.

#### *4.1.2 Adoption of Environmental practices and sustainability of the society: Proposed direct link*

Continuous environmental practices by organizations have a positive and significant influence on the sustainability of society, as new environmental practices are continually initiated with the maintenance of old projects. A good example of organization that practice environmental practices in Nigeria are NASCO company located in Jos Plateau State through it various environmental policies of caring for people, communities and its philosophies of environmentally friendly business (<https://www.nasco.net>) that includes but not limited to construction of a common room for plateau State Polytechnic Barkin Ladi where the company estimated over Five Million Naira for the project, provision of overhead tanks in major seminary missionary schools in Barkin Ladi Local Government, finance of various water project in Plateau State and beyond, adoption of Zawan Orphanage, continuous donation of reliefs materials to internally displace persons and to the physically challenged, distribution of treated mosquito net to it neighborhood, COVID-19 donation and recently, the Miango and Old Airport round about amongst many others which all cost over #100,000,000 (over one hundred million naira). The NANA Country Home Hotel is located in Angwan-Gada, Tudun-Wada, and Jos and positively impacts society and the environment through the construction of a community road in Angwa-Gada. Thus:

**H2** There is a positive relationship between the adoption of environmental practices and sustainability of society.

#### *4.1.3 Green Human resources management practices and sustainability of the society: Proposed direct and indirect link*

Green human resources management practices significantly influence environmental practices (Guerci et al. 2016; Rawashdeh 2018; Sharma and Gupta 2015; Sudin 2011; Yusoff et al. 2020). The continuously complex interplay of environmental practices has been found to be significant (Ahuja, 2015; Mashala, 2018; Zaid et al., 2018), which is linked to green human resource management practices (Guerci et al., 2016; Rawashdeh, 2018; Sudin, 2011; Yusoff et al., 2020), better illuminating the link between green human resource management practices and the sustainability of society (Ahuja, 2015; Chowdhury et al., 2017). Thus, managers, captains of industries, corporate organizations, and policy makers must ensure that they create a balance between the profit maximization interest of the firm, welfare of society, and the environment in order to be sustainable. In trying to establish equilibrium between the welfare of the society, environment, and profit maximization interest of the organization (triple bottom line theory), managers must enlighten their employees on how to generate profit without affecting the prospects or future of our upcoming generation to meet their needs. Hence, in enlightening employees about this balance, managers must incorporate the concept of "Green Human Resources Management practices (GHRMP)" into their strategy to address these issues appropriately. In making profit and ensuring the welfare of society and the environment, organizations and business individuals must know that profit maximization is not the only bottom line of their businesses, but to include the welfare of society and the environment. This evidence points to an indirect influence between green human resource management practices and society's associated sustainability, thus influencing the following propositions:

**H3** There is a positive relationship between green human resources management practices and environmental practices. (direct link)

**H4** The adoption of environmental practices will mediate the relationship between green human resource management practices and the sustainability of society such that an increase in environmental practices will in turn lead to a corresponding increase in the sustainability of society.

#### ***4.2 Empirical Review***

Globally, empirical evidence has proven that GHRM practices have an impact on environmental practices and performance, the development of communities, society at large, and sustainability over time (Halawi & Zaraket, 2018; Islam et al., 2019; Jermisittiparsert et al., 2019; Mashala, 2018). For example, Nijhawan (2014) conducted a study on Green Hrm: A requirement for a sustainable organization. The finding of the study revealed that environmentally friendly human resources practices and initiatives produces greater efficiencies, lower costs and better employees engagement and retention which in turn helps to build organization competitive advantage and long term sustainability by reducing carbon footprints, preserving natural resources and exploring alternative resources for the organizations practicing the green concept than organizations not practicing the green concept. Green human resource management is an initiative that has become a necessary requirement for managers, captains of industries, entrepreneurs, and organizations to achieve long-term sustainability. Nijhawan position was supported by Mashala (2018) finding in a study on green human resource management and environmental sustainability in Tanzania, that GHRM practices promote environmental sustainability if it is intergraded in the organization plans, practices, actions, policies, and strategies, and that the concept of GHRM practices in the context of developing countries is still new in public organizations especially in Tanzania were the study was carried out as there are insufficiently documented evidence of the functions and practices of green human resources management practices in developing countries. Managers appreciate the role of GHRM in creating and implementing green organizational plans, practices, policies, and organization for sustainable strategies (Halawi & Zaraket, 2018).

Nijhawan and Mashala's findings were further supported by a more recent study on green HRM and green business: a proposed model for organizational sustainability, Islam et al. (2019), who also confirmed that green business and green HRM practices increase environmental performance in a more sustainable way and manner for the organization as well as for the earth or environment.

Ahuja (2015), in his work on green HRM: Management of people through commitment towards environmental sustainability. Submitted in his finding that IT organizations now realize the value sustainability has on their competitiveness, reputation, and ability to attract and retain top talent. Utilizing HR skills in the organizational process, change management, and culture stewardship.

Guerci et al. (2016) in their work tittle "Translating stakeholder pressures into environmental performance the mediating role of green HRM practices" submitted that the pressures of both customer and regulatory stakeholder exert a direct influence on a firms environmental performance reason been that green training, green involvement, green performance management and green compensation management style mediate the relationships between the customer pressure and environmental performance. The findings do not support the mediating role of green hiring on the relationship between customer pressure and environmental performance.

Chowdhury et al. (2017) on Green HRM practices as a means of promoting CSR: Suggestions for Garments Industry in Bangladesh, India. Further, they found that there is a need for managers, entrepreneurs, and organizations to incorporate green practices in every function of human resources management. Green HRM practices result in sustainable development because they focus on the procurement, reservation, preservation of natural resources, and minimization of waste. The findings further assert that a very strong correlation exists between corporate social responsibility, green human resource management, and sustainability.

Zaid et al. (2018) in their work on green human resource management bundle practices and manufacturing organizations for performance optimization: a conceptual model in Palestine, submitted in their finding that there exist a significant relationship between GHRM bundle practices and manufacturing firm performance. In addition, GHRM practices have significant value to firms' green development and are considered important tools in the hands of managers, employers, organizations, or firms to engage employees or workers in green practices, thereby improving organizational performance. They further stated that the implementation and practices of GHRMP in manufacturing organizations, especially in developing countries such as Palestine, have attracted less interest amongst researchers and hence beg for further studies.

Yusoff et al. (2020) link green human resource management practices to environmental performance in the Hotel Industry. The findings of the study indicate a positive correlation between GHRM bundle practices and environmental performance (EP), with the clarification that appropriate and effective transfer of knowledge and the importance of environmental culture to employees through the implementation and practices of GHRM bundles improve environmental management, based on the necessary skills, abilities, and motivations of employees or personnel in an organization or firm. Environmentally conscious organizations or firms will incorporate green practices in their plans, actions, policies, and strategies, since green human resource management practices and environmental management (EM) enhance environmental and financial performance, and GHRM practices to an organization create an environmental reputation, create a green product, and competitive advantage for an organization that practices green concepts to stand tall amongst others in a competitively challenging environment. However, despite the many advantages of green concept practices in organizations and society, they are still emerging in developing countries and require more attention from researchers, scholars, and decision makers.

Rawashdeh (2018), in his work on the impact of green human resource management on organizational environmental performance in Jordanian health service organizations, asserted in his findings that the implementation of the group of Green HRM practices was at a moderate level, and that there was a statistically positive relationship between green HRM practices and environmental performance. The strongest correlation was with green recruitment and selection practices, whereas the weakest correlation was with training and development.

Sharma and Gupta (2015) on green HRM: An innovative approach to environmental sustainability, in the study advocated for GHRM practices as the future of green HRM as an innovative process appears promising for all stakeholders. Employers, managers, organizations, and practitioners can establish the importance of linking employee involvement and participation in environmental management programs to improve organizational environmental performance.

Pham et al. (2019) in a study on greening human resources management and employee commitment towards the environment: An interaction model, they suggested that; three GHRM practices are important tools in stimulating employees to involve in environmental practices and activities, a two-way interaction of green training and green organizational culture can make an organization employee's to commit towards the environment, especially at the high and average levels of green organizational culture. Further, the employee's commitment and involvement in the environment increased significantly through a three-way interaction, in which the two strongest effects are recognized with the conditions of highly green organizational culture and the average and high-green reward, whereas the interaction between green training and green reward is an unimportant factor in encouraging employee environmental attachment.

Shaban (2019) reviewed the concept of green HRM (GHRM) and its application practices (green staffing) with the suggested research agenda: a review from the literature background and testing construction perspective, submitted in the findings that GHRM can implement numerous GHRM practices from the perspective of operation and processes, including but not limited to the acquisition of competent hands, human resources planning, recruitment, selection and placement, training and development, performance management system (PMS), reward and compensation management, and

strategic human resources management practices that all lead to organizational goal achievement in a dynamic environment.

Jermisittiparsert et al. (2019) in a work on ‘Do consumers expect companies to be socially responsible? The impact of corporate social responsibility on buying behavior’ submitted in their findings that logistics companies should focus on two corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices that contribute to the development of the environment and human resources. Contributing to the development of the environment and human resources both promotes community development and higher customer satisfaction, which is beneficial to society and the organization or firm. Therefore, there exists a positively significant relationship between the human resources of an organization and community development, and an increased contribution to the development of the environment and development of human resources increases an organization logistics customer’s satisfaction level.

Singh et al. (2020) submitted that Investing in environmental management and development of the society welfare is beneficial to firm to earn good image in the eyes of stakeholders, as the later has become more demanding and pressurizing firms to go green in all its process, products and services. Thus, organizations, firms, and managers should emphasize and reinforce the green leadership behaviors and abilities necessary to implement green HRM practices in a complex environment. Green HRM practices are essential to attract, hire, acquire, develop, and sustain employees who bring to work green beliefs, values, behavior, and attitudes to help support firms’ strategies to compete with competitors through green processes, products, and services in a challenging complex competitive environment. The study suggests that green HRM practices need organizational developmental culture, practices, strategy, and an organizational structure to encourage, support, and enhance organizational green innovation for sustained competitive advantage. The study further suggested that leaders, captains of industries, managers, entrepreneurs, corporate organizations, and community leaders should institutionalize environmental management practices in their performance appraisal and management systems for employees to continuously display job behaviors, namely green workplace analysis, recycling, waste management, and energy efficiency.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study presented a detailed overview and proposed a framework for green human resource management practices and the sustainability of society mediated by the adoption of environmental practices. The study began by explaining the concepts of green human resource management practices (green recruitment and selection, green training and development, green performance management and appraisal, green pay and reward, and green involvement) and the adoption of environmental practices as mediators. A theoretical perspective of the study was provided using the resource-based view, dynamic capabilities theory, and triple bottom line theory, followed by the methodology. A careful empirical review of related studies revealed that the link between green human resource management practices and society’s sustainability is visibly positive, which has influenced the development of the proposed conceptual framework. Green human resource management practice was conceptualized as the use of the basic well-known concepts of HRM, its policies, practices, systems, objectives, functions, processes, activities, and strategies in an environmentally friendly manner that is mutually beneficial to the individual, society, natural environment, and business organization. The framework envisaged, on the one hand, a direct link between green human resource management practices and the sustainability of society, and on the other hand, an indirect link between GHRM practices and the sustainability of society, and therefore proposed the adoption of environmental practices as a mediating variable between GHRM practices and the sustainability of society. To remove the effects of exogenous influences on the model, age, sex, size, level of education, work experience, and feedback were proposed as controllable variables.

### ***5.1 Practical Contribution and Implication of The Study***

This study makes four key contributions. The first contribution of this study to the green human resource management practices and sustainable performance literature in the context of developing countries is to provide a framework that would guide future researchers and scholars in the field. Second, the study has synthesized evidence from the literature to conceptualize green human resources management

practices as the use of the basic well-known concepts of HRM, its policies, practices, systems, objectives, functions, processes, activities, and strategies in an environmentally friendly manner that is mutually beneficial to the individual, society, natural environment, and business organization. Using the resource-based view, dynamic capabilities, and a triple-bottom-line theoretical lens. Third, the study has also been able to delineate the adoption of environmental practices (mediating variable) that most likely accounts for the indirect link between green human resource management practices and the sustainability of society. Fourth, the study proposed five green human resource management practice constructs that are most likely associated with the sustainability of society with controllable variables proposed as age, sex, size, level of education, work experience, and feedback. Fifthly, it evaluate the impact of green human resources management practices on sustainability of society in Nigeria, with a conceptual framework developed, providing a valid mechanism and useful insights for corporate organizations, entrepreneurs, researchers/scholars, captain of industries, policy makers, community leaders and government amongst others to facilitate using human resources (HR) practices, as a means for improving environmental practices and sustainability of the society

The simplified model in **Figure 1** extends the ontological nature of green human resource management practices by proposing a framework that can be used to develop predictive models and empirical studies to assess the influence of green human resource management practices on the sustainability of society, mediated by the adoption of environmental practices.

### **5.2 Suggestion/Recommendation**

Therefore, we suggest that for an organization or firm to make green innovation in its processes and products and to stay relevant and gain competitive advantages in a highly competitive market environment, a firm's or organizational transformational leadership style and initiative is necessary, which also helps motivate employees with green ability and skills to feel comfortable through an organization's supportive environment and provide employees with the necessary proactive measures and opportunities to realize their green potentialities in the organization. Second, we suggest that firms, organizations, managers, and entrepreneurs invest more in green HRM practices and initiatives, and consider it a strategic asset or resource for competitive advantage for the organization in order to direct its human potential towards environmental management activities so as to improve the organizational effectiveness and efficiency, and the welfare of the society in an evolving complex environment. We previously stated that GHRM reflects a firm's strategic orientation, beliefs, and value toward environmental management and encourages employees to exhibit green job behaviors, attitudes, and practices to reduce environmental pollution by most organizations, especially in the oil-rich southeastern part of Nigeria and the rest of the world, because unconditional support and commitment from the top management, policymakers, and captain of industries work miracle for green innovation, viz. environmental performance and sustainability. Therefore, based on the findings of our study, we suggest that entrepreneurs, top management, organizations, and policy makers should work on integrating firms' environmental management goals and objectives with green HRM policies and practices to support and sustain green processes, product innovation, high reputation, and recommendation from society, and stay on top of the game in an evolving complex environment.

### **5.3 Limitation and Direction for Future Research**

This study is limited to the conceptualization of green human resource management practices as the use of the basic well-known concepts of HRM, its policies, practices, systems, objectives, functions, processes, activities, and strategies in an environmentally friendly manner that is mutually beneficial to the individual, society, natural environment, and business organization, with the construct conceived as an experienced construct rather than a perceived construct. Green human resource management practices that influence the sustainability of society are mediated by the adoption of environmental practices with controllable variables, such as age, sex, size, level of education, work experience, and feedback. However, other mediator and controllable variables, such as organizational policies, ethics, values, and regulations, could also be considered by researchers in future studies. Future researchers could also use quantitative methodology to test the validity of the theorized model. Other areas for future researchers would be to empirically test the effect of green human resource management practices on organizational performance using management by walking around (MBWA) as a mediator.

Longitudinal studies to determine causal relationships between the variables (green human resource management practices on sustainability of organizations and society) using management by walking around (MBWA) as a mediator in a Nigerian context would also be appropriate.

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