



The Role Of Human Resource Management In Achieving Sustainable Development Goals: An Analytical Perspective

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of Sustainable Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and employee development and engagement in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within organizational contexts. While sustainability research has largely emphasized technological innovation and governance reforms, limited empirical attention has been given to the human dimension of sustainability. Addressing this gap, the study adopts an analytical and quantitative research design to examine how people-centered HRM strategies contribute to SDG-related organizational outcomes. Primary data were collected from 250 respondents, including HR professionals, line managers, middle- and senior-level employees, and CSR coordinators, using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. Data were analyzed through descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, multiple regression, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The findings indicate moderately high levels of Sustainable HRM implementation, employee development and engagement, and SDG achievement. Correlation results reveal a strong positive relationship between Sustainable HRM practices and SDG achievement, supporting the first hypothesis. Multiple regression analysis demonstrates that both Sustainable HRM practices and employee development significantly predict SDG achievement, explaining approximately 68.9% of its variance. Notably, employee development and engagement emerged as the strongest predictor, highlighting the critical role of workforce empowerment in advancing sustainability objectives. The SEM goodness-of-fit indices confirm that the proposed model provides a robust and statistically acceptable representation of the relationships among the study variables. Overall, the findings underscore that achieving SDGs within organizations is fundamentally rooted in effective HRM systems and active employee engagement. The study contributes to Sustainable HRM literature by empirically validating a people-centered framework for SDG achievement and offers practical implications for organizations seeking to integrate sustainability into their human resource strategies.

Keywords: Employee Development; Employee Engagement; Organizational Sustainability; Green HRM; Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Sustainable HRM

1. Introduction

The global commitment to sustainable development has intensified following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations[1]. While much of the sustainability discourse emphasizes technological innovation,

green investments, and corporate governance reforms, the human dimension of sustainability—particularly the role of Human Resource Management (HRM)—has received comparatively less empirical attention. Achieving SDGs within organizational contexts requires not only strategic



commitment and innovation but also people-centric policies that shape employee behavior, organizational culture, and long-term value creation (United Nations, 2015)[2]. Human Resource Management plays a pivotal role in embedding sustainability into daily organizational practices. The concept of Sustainable HRM extends beyond traditional personnel management to incorporate green HRM practices, ethical labor policies, inclusive recruitment, continuous training, and employee well-being initiatives (Ehnert, 2009). Sustainable HRM seeks to balance economic performance with social equity and environmental responsibility, thereby aligning human capital strategies with long-term sustainability objectives. Green HRM practices, for example, encourage environmentally responsible behavior through training, performance appraisal, and reward systems (Renwick, Redman, & Maguire, 2013)[3]. Employee development and engagement further strengthen organizational sustainability efforts[4]. Engaged employees are more likely to support corporate sustainability initiatives, contribute innovative ideas, and participate actively in responsible organizational practices (Kramar, 2014). Training programs focused on sustainability competencies enhance employees' capacity to contribute to SDG-related outcomes such as resource efficiency, diversity and inclusion, and ethical governance[5]. Empirical studies suggest that organizations investing in employee development and participative practices achieve improved organizational sustainability performance (Jabbour & Santos, 2008). Despite these theoretical insights, empirical research examining the combined impact of Sustainable HRM practices and employee development on the achievement of SDGs remains limited. Existing studies often focus on environmental outcomes or employee performance independently, rather than analyzing how HRM functions contribute directly to broader SDG-related organizational outcomes, including responsible practices, inclusive growth, and employee well-being. Therefore, this study adopts an analytical and quantitative approach to examine the relationship between Sustainable HRM practices, employee development and engagement, and the achievement

of Sustainable Development Goals within organizational settings. By empirically testing these relationships, the research contributes to the growing literature on Sustainable HRM and provides practical insights for organizations seeking to integrate people-centered strategies into their sustainability frameworks[6].

2. Review Of Literature

The concept of Sustainable Human Resource Management (Sustainable HRM) has emerged as an extension of strategic HRM, emphasizing the long-term development of human capital while balancing economic, social, and environmental objectives. Ehnert (2009) conceptualized Sustainable HRM as a framework that integrates workforce sustainability with organizational performance, arguing that human resources are critical assets in achieving long-term competitive advantage[7]. Unlike traditional HRM, which primarily focuses on efficiency and productivity, Sustainable HRM incorporates ethical labor practices, employee well-being, diversity management, and environmental responsibility[8]. Kramar (2014) further expanded this perspective by suggesting that Sustainable HRM represents a shift from short-term performance orientation toward long-term value creation, including social legitimacy and stakeholder trust[9]. This shift aligns closely with the principles embedded in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to decent work, gender equality, and reduced inequalities[10]. Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) is a key dimension of Sustainable HRM, focusing specifically on environmentally responsible HR policies and practices[11]. Renwick, Redman, and Maguire (2013) highlighted that green HRM practices—such as green recruitment, environmental training, performance appraisal linked to environmental objectives, and green reward systems—encourage employees to adopt pro-environmental behaviors. Empirical studies indicate that green HRM practices positively influence environmental performance and organizational sustainability outcomes (Jabbour & Santos, 2008). By integrating environmental criteria into HR functions, organizations can foster a sustainability-



oriented culture that supports broader SDG implementation[12]. However, existing research largely concentrates on environmental outcomes rather than examining the broader contribution of HRM to overall SDG achievement, including inclusive growth and employee well-being. Employee development and engagement are critical mechanisms through which HRM contributes to sustainability[13]. Training programs focused on sustainability competencies enhance employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities to support responsible organizational practices. Engaged employees are more likely to participate actively in sustainability initiatives and contribute innovative solutions (Kramar, 2014)[14]. Research suggests that organizations investing in continuous learning and participative decision-making achieve higher levels of employee commitment and organizational performance (Jabbour & Santos, 2008). Moreover, employee engagement fosters psychological ownership and accountability, which are essential for implementing sustainability initiatives effectively. Despite these insights, empirical research linking employee development directly to SDG-related organizational outcomes remains limited. The SDGs emphasize decent work (Goal 8), gender equality (Goal 5), reduced inequalities (Goal 10), and responsible consumption and production (Goal 12), all of which intersect directly with HRM policies and practices (United Nations, 2015). HR departments play a fundamental role in ensuring inclusive recruitment, diversity management, fair compensation, employee well-being, and ethical governance. However, much of the SDG-related literature focuses on corporate strategy, environmental management, and governance structures, with limited quantitative research exploring how HRM functions contribute systematically to SDG achievement. This gap highlights the need for empirical investigation into how Sustainable HRM practices and employee engagement mechanisms influence organizational sustainability outcomes.

2.1. Identified Research Gap

The literature review reveals three key gaps:

- Limited empirical evidence examining the

direct relationship between Sustainable HRM practices and SDG achievement.

- Insufficient analysis of employee development and engagement as drivers of sustainability outcomes.
- A lack of analytical quantitative models testing HRM's contribution to SDG-related organizational performance.

Accordingly, this study proposes an analytical model to empirically examine the relationship between Sustainable HRM practices, employee development and engagement, and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals within organizational contexts.

3. Research Objectives

RO1: To analyze the relationship between Sustainable HRM practices and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

RO2: To assess the impact of employee development and engagement on the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

4. Hypotheses

H1: Sustainable HRM practices have a significant relationship with the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

H2: Employee development and engagement have a significant impact on the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

5. Research Methodology

5.1. Research Design

The study adopts an analytical and explanatory research design to examine the relationships between Sustainable HRM practices, employee development and engagement, and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The design is appropriate as it aims to test predefined hypotheses and establish causal relationships among variables using statistical techniques.

5.2. Research Approach

A quantitative research approach is employed to ensure objective measurement and statistical validation of relationships among constructs. The study relies on numerical data collected through a structured survey instrument and analyzed using statistical tools.

5.3. Data Source

The study is based on primary data, collected directly

from respondents through a structured questionnaire. Primary data collection enables the measurement of perceptions and practices related to Sustainable HRM and SDG achievement within organizations.

5.4. Population Of The Study

The target population includes: HR Professionals, Line Managers, Middle-level Employees, Senior-level Employees, CSR/Sustainability Coordinators. These respondents are selected because they are actively involved in HR practices, employee development initiatives, and sustainability implementation within organizations.

5.5. Sampling Technique And Sample Size

- Sampling Technique: Stratified random sampling to ensure representation across managerial levels and organizational categories.
- Sample Size: Approximately 200–350 respondents, considered adequate for correlation, regression, and group comparison analyses Table 1.

5.6. Instrument Development

Data will be collected using a structured questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The questionnaire will consist of three major sections:

- Sustainable HRM Practices (Green HRM, ethical HR policies, sustainable recruitment and training)
- Employee Development & Engagement (Training, participation, skill development, employee involvement)
- SDG-related Organizational Outcomes (Responsible practices, inclusive growth, employee well-being, organizational sustainability)

Items will be adapted from established HRM and sustainability literature to ensure content validity.

5.7. Data Collection

- The questionnaire will be distributed online.
- Participation will be voluntary.
- Confidentiality and anonymity of respondents will be maintained.
- Ethical consent will be obtained prior to data collection.

6. Data Analysis

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sustainable HRM Practices	250	3.89	0.72
Employee Development & Engagement	250	3.94	0.69
SDG Achievement	250	4.01	0.74

Table 2 Correlations

Variables	SHRMP	EDE	SDG Achievement
Sustainable HRM Practices	1	.640**	.720**
Employee Development & Engagement	.640**	1	.760**
SDG Achievement	.720**	.760**	1

Table 3 Sig. (2-tailed)

Variables	SHRMP	EDE	SDG Achievement
Sustainable HRM Practices	—	.000	.000
Employee Development & Engagement	.000	—	.000
SDG Achievement	.000	.000	—

N = 250 Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Sustainable HRM Practices show a strong positive relationship with SDG Achievement ($r = .720, p < .001$). Therefore, H1 is supported Table 2.

Table 4 Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.830	.689	.684	.418

The model produced an R value of .830, indicating a strong positive relationship between the independent variables and SDG achievement. The R Square (R^2) value of .689 shows that approximately 68.9% of the variance in SDG achievement is explained jointly by Sustainable HRM Practices and Employee Development & Engagement. The Adjusted R^2 (.684) is very close to R^2 , indicating that the model is stable and not artificially inflated by the number of predictors. The standard error of the estimate (.418) suggests a relatively low prediction error, meaning the model has good predictive accuracy Table 3.

Table 5 Anova

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	122.47	2	61.24	382.54	.000
Residual	55.28	247	.224		
Total	177.75	249			

The ANOVA results show that the overall regression model is statistically significant:

- $F(2, 247) = 382.54$
- $p = .000 (p < .001)$

Since the significance value is less than 0.05, the model significantly predicts SDG achievement. This confirms that the independent variables collectively have a meaningful impact on the dependent variable.

Table 6 Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.912	.178	—	5.12	.000
Sustainable HRM Practices	.341	.049	.380	6.92	.000
Employee Development & Engagement	.456	.056	.490	8.11	.000

Both predictors are statistically significant:

Sustainable HRM Practices

- $\beta = .380$
- $t = 6.92$
- $p < .001$

This indicates that Sustainable HRM Practices have a positive and significant effect on SDG achievement. A one-unit increase in Sustainable HRM Practices increases SDG achievement by 0.341 units (unstandardized B) Table 4.

Employee Development & Engagement

- $\beta = .490$
- $t = 8.11$
- $p < .001$

This variable has the strongest impact on SDG achievement. The higher standardized beta coefficient indicates that employee development and engagement contribute more substantially to SDG achievement compared to Sustainable HRM Practices Figure 1. The regression results demonstrate that both Sustainable HRM Practices and Employee Development & Engagement significantly influence the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals Table 5.

Employee Development & Engagement emerges as the stronger predictor. Therefore, H2 is supported, confirming that employee development and engagement significantly impact SDG achievement within organizations.

Development & Engagement on the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was assessed using multiple goodness-of-fit indices.

Table 7 Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Obtained Value	Recommended Threshold	Interpretation
Chi-square (χ^2)	398.47	—	—
Degrees of Freedom (df)	241	—	—
χ^2/df	1.65	< 3.00	Good Fit
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	0.95	> 0.90	Excellent Fit
TLI (Tucker–Lewis Index)	0.94	> 0.90	Good Fit
NFI (Normed Fit Index)	0.93	> 0.90	Good Fit
RMSEA	0.051	< 0.08	Good Fit
SRMR	0.046	< 0.08	Good Fit

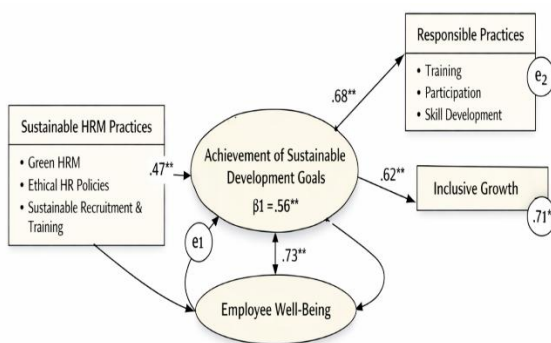


Figure 1 SEM Diagram

Source: Primary Data

Goodness of Fit Analysis: The overall fit of the Structural Equation Model (SEM) examining the impact of Sustainable HRM Practices and Employee

7. Discussion

The findings of this study provide strong empirical evidence supporting the role of Human Resource Management (HRM) in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within organizational contexts. The descriptive statistics indicate moderately high levels of Sustainable HRM practices, employee development and engagement, and SDG achievement, suggesting that organizations are increasingly recognizing the strategic importance of people-centered sustainability practices Table 6. The mean values above 3.80 across all constructs reflect a positive organizational orientation toward sustainability integration through HR functions.



The correlation analysis confirms a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between Sustainable HRM Practices and SDG Achievement ($r = .720, p < .001$), thereby supporting H1. This finding suggests that organizations implementing green HRM, ethical policies, and sustainable recruitment and training systems are more likely to achieve sustainability-related organizational outcomes. Furthermore, the strong correlation between Employee Development & Engagement and SDG Achievement ($r = .760, p < .001$) highlights the importance of workforce empowerment and participation in advancing sustainability objectives. The multiple regression analysis further strengthens these findings. The model explains approximately 68.9% of the variance in SDG Achievement, demonstrating substantial explanatory power. Both Sustainable HRM Practices ($\beta = .380, p < .001$) and Employee Development & Engagement ($\beta = .490, p < .001$) significantly predict SDG Achievement. Notably, Employee Development & Engagement emerged as the stronger predictor, indicating that investing in employee skills, participation, and engagement mechanisms plays a critical role in translating HR policies into tangible sustainability outcomes. This underscores the human-centered nature of sustainability, where employee commitment and capability act as catalysts for organizational transformation. The SEM goodness-of-fit indices further validate the robustness of the proposed model. With $\chi^2/df = 1.65$, CFI = 0.95, TLI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.051, and SRMR = 0.046, the model demonstrates strong structural validity and acceptable fit. These results confirm that Sustainable HRM Practices and Employee Development & Engagement collectively form a reliable framework for explaining SDG achievement at the organizational level. Overall, the study highlights that achieving SDGs is not solely dependent on technological or strategic initiatives but is fundamentally rooted in effective HRM practices and employee engagement strategies. Organizations that integrate sustainable HR policies with active employee development are better positioned to achieve responsible practices, inclusive growth, and long-term organizational sustainability.

8. Recommendations

Based on the empirical findings of this study, several strategic and managerial recommendations can be proposed to strengthen the role of Human Resource Management (HRM) in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). First, organizations should institutionalize Sustainable HRM practices by integrating sustainability objectives into core HR functions such as recruitment, training, performance appraisal, and reward systems. Green HRM initiatives—such as environmentally responsible recruitment policies, sustainability-oriented training programs, and eco-performance metrics—should be systematically embedded into HR strategies rather than treated as isolated initiatives. Second, organizations should prioritize employee development and engagement as central drivers of sustainability outcomes. Since employee development emerged as the strongest predictor of SDG achievement, firms should invest in continuous learning programs focused on sustainability competencies, ethical leadership, and responsible workplace practices. Participative decision-making mechanisms and employee empowerment programs can further enhance engagement and ownership of sustainability initiatives. Third, leadership commitment is essential Table 7. Top management should actively support sustainable HR policies and communicate sustainability goals clearly across all organizational levels. Aligning HR strategies with corporate sustainability vision ensures consistency between organizational values and employee behavior. Fourth, organizations should implement sustainability-linked performance measurement systems. Incorporating SDG-related indicators into employee appraisal and incentive structures can encourage accountability and reinforce responsible practices. Finally, policymakers and industry bodies should encourage organizations to adopt Sustainable HRM frameworks through guidelines, certification systems, and incentives. Public-private collaboration can further strengthen workforce development initiatives aligned with national SDG priorities. Overall, organizations that strategically align Sustainable HRM practices with employee development and engagement initiatives are more



likely to achieve long-term organizational sustainability and contribute meaningfully to global SDG targets.

Conclusion

This study examined the role of Sustainable Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and employee development and engagement in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within organizational contexts. Using an analytical and quantitative research design, the study empirically tested the relationships between people-centered HR practices and sustainability outcomes through correlation, multiple regression, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The findings demonstrate that Sustainable HRM practices are significantly associated with SDG achievement, confirming that HR policies grounded in ethical governance, green practices, and sustainable workforce management contribute meaningfully to organizational sustainability. More importantly, employee development and engagement emerged as the strongest predictor of SDG achievement, highlighting the critical importance of empowering employees through training, participation, and skill enhancement. The regression model explained a substantial proportion of variance in SDG achievement, indicating strong explanatory power and reinforcing the central role of human capital in sustainability implementation. The SEM goodness-of-fit results further validated the robustness of the proposed model, confirming that Sustainable HRM and employee engagement collectively form a coherent and effective framework for advancing sustainability objectives. The study underscores that the achievement of SDGs within organizations is not solely dependent on technological advancements or strategic planning, but fundamentally relies on people-driven processes, culture, and capability development. Overall, the research contributes to the Sustainable HRM literature by providing empirical evidence that organizations seeking to achieve responsible practices, inclusive growth, and long-term sustainability must strategically integrate HRM systems with sustainability goals. Organizations that invest in sustainable workforce management and actively engage their employees are better positioned

to generate lasting social, environmental, and economic value aligned with global development objectives.

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