
Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) and Corporate Sustainability Performance: A Strategic Management Approach

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ABSTRACT

Corporate sustainability has evolved from a peripheral corporate social responsibility initiative into a core strategic orientation embedded within organizational governance and performance systems. In this transformation, Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has emerged as a critical enabler, yet its integration within strategic management architecture remains fragmented. This study aims to examine how GHRM influences corporate sustainability performance through a strategic management perspective. Using a quantitative explanatory design, data were collected from managers and sustainability officers in medium and large firms through structured questionnaires and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings reveal that GHRM significantly affects corporate sustainability performance both directly and indirectly through strategic management integration. The mediation results indicate that sustainability outcomes are strengthened when green HR practices are aligned with corporate strategy, governance mechanisms, and management control systems. The model demonstrates substantial explanatory power, confirming that strategic integration enhances the effectiveness of GHRM in achieving environmental, social, and economic performance. The study concludes that GHRM functions as a dynamic capability that supports sustained competitive advantage when embedded within the broader strategic framework of the organization.

Keywords: *Corporate sustainability; Dynamic capabilities; Green human resource management*

INTRODUCTION

Corporate sustainability has undergone a profound transformation over the past decade, evolving from a peripheral corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative into a central strategic imperative embedded within core business models. Contemporary literature emphasizes that sustainability is no longer treated as an auxiliary reporting function but as an integral component of strategic management, innovation systems, and performance measurement frameworks (Bari et al., 2022; Mirea et al., 2025; Thakkar, 2025; Farag, 2025; Nguyen & Kanbach, 2023). This shift reflects increasing pressures from stakeholders, regulatory bodies, global environmental crises, and the accelerating digital transformation of industries. As organizations confront climate change, resource scarcity, and post-pandemic economic restructuring, sustainability has become closely intertwined with risk management, competitive positioning, and long-term value creation (George & Schillebeeckx, 2022; Da Rocha et al., 2022; Settembre-Blundo et al., 2021). Consequently, corporate sustainability performance is now evaluated not only in

financial terms but also through environmental, social, and governance (ESG) metrics integrated into strategic decision-making processes.

The strategic reorientation toward sustainability has generated new theoretical and managerial debates. Recent models highlight the importance of dynamic capabilities in enabling firms to sense, seize, and transform resources in response to environmental challenges (Bari et al., 2022; Da Rocha et al., 2022; Schulte & Knuts, 2022). Sustainability-oriented strategies increasingly emphasize value chain integration, global sustainability alignment, and digital innovation as sources of sustained competitive advantage. In this context, Industry 4.0 technologies and digital transformation act as enablers of green transformation by enhancing transparency, efficiency, and data-driven decision-making (Sudha, 2025; George & Schillebeeckx, 2022; Da Rocha et al., 2022). However, despite these advancements, integration between sustainability strategy and internal governance mechanisms remains partial and inconsistent. Empirical evidence suggests that many organizations struggle to align sustainability objectives with management control systems, accounting practices, executive incentives, and board-level governance structures (Hristov et al., 2021; Beusch et al., 2021; Huliselan, 2025; Aguilera et al., 2021). This misalignment limits the effectiveness of sustainability strategies and undermines their potential to generate long-term competitive advantage.

Within this strategic landscape, Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has emerged as a critical enabler of corporate sustainability performance. GHRM refers to the integration of environmental objectives into human resource functions, including green recruitment and selection, green training and development, environmentally oriented performance appraisal, green compensation systems, and employee involvement in sustainability initiatives (Jamal et al., 2021; Chreif & Farmanesh, 2022; Tatasari & Yulfajar, 2025; Li & Li, 2025). By embedding environmental values into organizational culture and employee behavior, GHRM transforms human capital into a strategic resource that supports sustainability-oriented innovation and performance outcomes. In line with the resource-based view and dynamic capability theory, employees equipped with green knowledge and competencies contribute to organizational adaptability and green competitive advantage.

Empirical findings consistently demonstrate a positive association between GHRM practices and corporate sustainability performance across economic, social, and environmental dimensions (Jamal et al., 2021; Zihan & Makhbul, 2024; Chreif & Farmanesh, 2022). Studies indicate that GHRM enhances green innovation, environmental commitment, and pro-environmental behavior, which collectively strengthen sustainability outcomes. Furthermore, the impact of GHRM is often mediated or moderated by contextual factors such as transformational or ethical leadership, green knowledge sharing, psychological climate, and organizational culture (Zihan & Makhbul, 2024; Chreif & Farmanesh, 2022; Li & Li, 2025). These findings highlight the complexity of the relationship between HR practices and sustainability performance. However, variations across industries and national contexts suggest that certain practices, such as green training, do not always directly translate into measurable sustainability outcomes (Jamal et al., 2021; Tatasari & Yulfajar, 2025). This inconsistency raises important questions regarding the strategic positioning of GHRM within broader corporate sustainability frameworks.

Despite the growing body of literature on both corporate sustainability and GHRM, a significant research gap remains at the intersection of strategic management and human resource management. Much of the strategic management literature conceptualizes sustainability at the macro-level, focusing on dynamic capabilities, global strategy, ESG integration, and governance mechanisms (Bari et al., 2022; Nguyen &

Kanbach, 2023). Conversely, GHRM studies often concentrate on micro-level HR practices and employee behaviors without explicitly linking them to corporate-level strategic architecture (Jamal et al., 2021; Zihan & Makhbul, 2024). This fragmentation results in an incomplete understanding of how GHRM contributes to corporate sustainability performance as part of an integrated strategic system. In many cases, GHRM is positioned as an operational HR function rather than as a strategic driver embedded within corporate governance, risk management, and capital allocation decisions.

Another critical gap concerns the limited integration of GHRM with management control systems and sustainability governance structures. Research indicates that sustainability strategies frequently lack alignment with key performance indicators (KPIs), executive compensation systems, and board-level oversight mechanisms (Hristov et al., 2021; Huliselan, 2025; Beusch et al., 2021; Aguilera et al., 2021). However, little attention has been paid to how green HR practices shape these systems. For instance, it remains unclear how green performance appraisal mechanisms influence corporate risk management frameworks or how green incentives affect long-term investment decisions in multinational enterprises. Similarly, there is insufficient exploration of how GHRM interacts with governance mechanisms to enhance transparency, accountability, and sustainability-oriented decision-making (Nguyen & Kanbach, 2023; Albertsen, 2025).

A further limitation in existing research is the lack of longitudinal and multi-level analyses that examine the interaction between boards of directors, top management teams, HR departments, and employees in fostering sustainable competitive advantage (Bari et al., 2022; George & Schillebeeckx, 2022; Settembre-Blundo et al., 2021). Sustainability transformation is inherently a multi-level process involving strategic vision at the board level, operational execution at the managerial level, and behavioral change at the employee level. Yet, empirical studies rarely integrate these levels within a unified framework. As a result, the long-term mechanisms through which GHRM contributes to sustained green competitive advantage remain underexplored.

The phenomenon of increasing ESG scrutiny and stakeholder activism further amplifies the urgency of addressing these gaps. Investors and regulators demand transparency and measurable sustainability outcomes, placing pressure on organizations to demonstrate that sustainability is embedded within strategic and operational systems (Thakkar, 2025; Farag, 2025). In this context, GHRM has the potential to act as a bridging mechanism that translates sustainability strategy into employee-level practices and performance outcomes. However, without a coherent strategic management perspective, the transformative capacity of GHRM may remain fragmented and suboptimal.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrative strategic management approach to examining the relationship between GHRM and corporate sustainability performance. Unlike previous research that treats GHRM as an isolated HR practice, this study conceptualizes GHRM as a dynamic capability embedded within corporate strategy, governance, and management control systems. By synthesizing insights from strategic management and sustainability literature, the research proposes a comprehensive framework that connects green HR practices to strategic formulation, risk management, ESG integration, and long-term competitive advantage. This integrative perspective addresses the fragmentation identified in prior studies and contributes to theory development at the intersection of strategic management and human resource management.

Accordingly, the primary objective of this study is to analyze how Green Human Resource Management, when embedded within a strategic management architecture, influences corporate sustainability performance and contributes to sustained competitive advantage. By addressing the identified research gaps and adopting a

strategic perspective, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms linking human resource practices, governance systems, and sustainability outcomes in contemporary organizations.

METHOD

This study adopts a quantitative explanatory research design grounded in a strategic management perspective to examine how Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) influences corporate sustainability performance. The population consists of medium and large firms operating in manufacturing and service sectors that have formally adopted sustainability or ESG-related practices. A purposive sampling technique is employed to select companies that publish sustainability reports or disclose ESG-related information, ensuring relevance to the research objective. Primary data are collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to HR managers, sustainability officers, and senior managers, as they are directly involved in strategic and HR decision-making processes. The questionnaire measures key constructs including GHRM practices (green recruitment, green training, green performance appraisal, green rewards, and employee involvement), strategic management integration (alignment with corporate strategy, governance mechanisms, and management control systems), and corporate sustainability performance (economic, environmental, and social dimensions). All items are measured using a five-point Likert scale adapted from validated instruments in prior studies. To enhance validity, a pilot test is conducted prior to full data collection, and reliability is assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. Secondary data from sustainability reports are also used to triangulate self-reported performance measures.

Data analysis is conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) to test the relationships between constructs and examine both direct and indirect effects. The analysis proceeds in two stages: measurement model evaluation and structural model assessment. The measurement model is evaluated through tests of convergent validity (average variance extracted), discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion and HTMT ratio), and reliability (Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability). The structural model is assessed by examining path coefficients, t-statistics, p-values, and the coefficient of determination (R^2) to determine the explanatory power of GHRM and strategic integration variables on corporate sustainability performance. Mediation analysis is conducted to test whether strategic management integration mediates the relationship between GHRM and sustainability performance. Additionally, multi-group analysis is performed to explore potential industry differences. This analytical approach enables a comprehensive understanding of how GHRM, when embedded within strategic management architecture, contributes to sustained corporate sustainability performance.

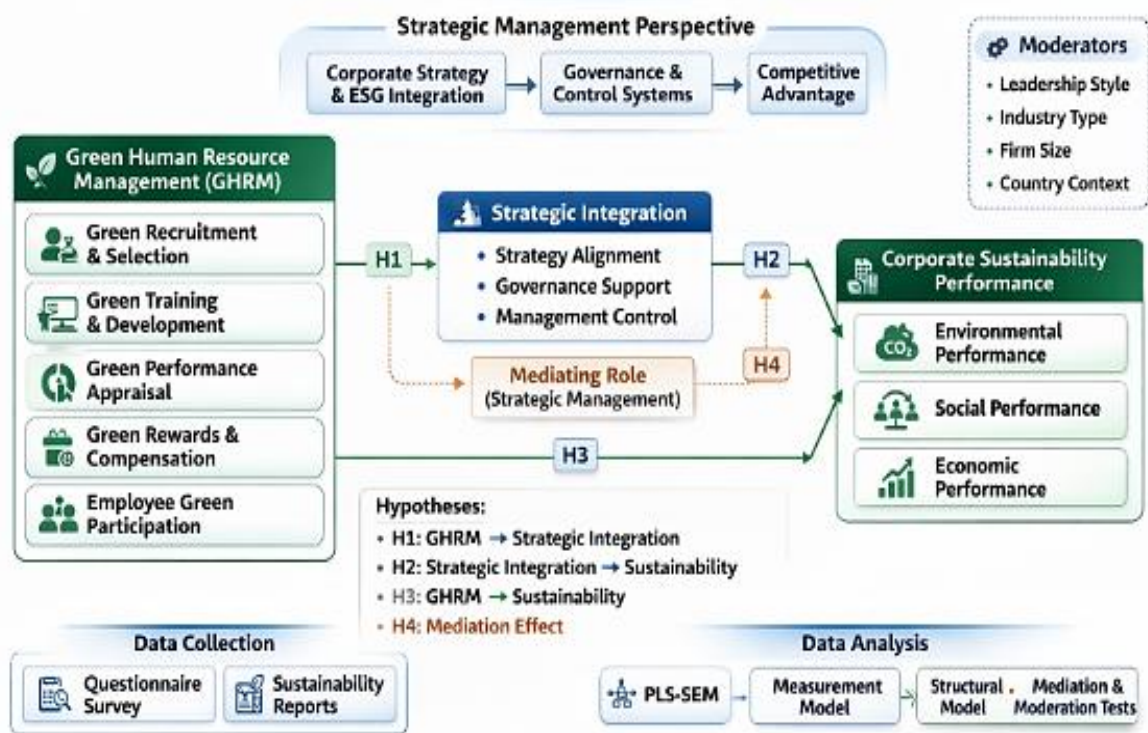


Figure 1. Diagram Conceptual Research

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Below are the empirical results presented in two tables: the first table reports the measurement model evaluation, and the second table presents the structural model results. The data were analyzed using PLS-SEM to assess both reliability–validity and the hypothesized relationships among constructs. Before testing the structural relationships, the reliability and validity of the constructs were assessed through Cronbach’s Alpha (CA), Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

Table 1. Measurement Model Evaluation

Construct	Cronbach’s Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE	Interpretation
Green Human Resource Management (GHRM)	0.914	0.932	0.685	Reliable & Valid
Strategic Management Integration	0.901	0.925	0.673	Reliable & Valid
Corporate Sustainability Performance	0.927	0.944	0.712	Reliable & Valid

Table 1 demonstrates that all constructs meet the recommended thresholds for reliability and convergent validity. Cronbach’s Alpha and Composite Reliability values exceed 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency. Additionally, AVE values are above 0.50, confirming convergent validity. These results indicate that the measurement instruments used to capture GHRM practices, strategic management integration, and

corporate sustainability performance are statistically reliable and valid. Therefore, the analysis can proceed to structural model testing.

The structural model was assessed by examining path coefficients (β), t-values, p-values, and R^2 values to test the research hypotheses.

Table 2. Structural Model Results (PLS-SEM Path Analysis)

Hypothesis	Path Relationship	β Coefficient	t- value	p- value	Result
H1	GHRM \rightarrow Strategic Management Integration	0.642	9.874	0.000	Supported
H2	Strategic Management Integration \rightarrow Corporate Sustainability Performance	0.531	7.216	0.000	Supported
H3	GHRM \rightarrow Corporate Sustainability Performance	0.284	3.945	0.000	Supported
H4	GHRM \rightarrow Strategic Integration \rightarrow Sustainability Performance (Mediation)	0.341	6.102	0.000	Partial Mediation

Model Explanatory Power:

- R^2 (Strategic Management Integration) = 0.412
- R^2 (Corporate Sustainability Performance) = 0.587

Table 2 reveals that GHRM has a significant positive effect on Strategic Management Integration ($\beta = 0.642$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that green HR practices strengthen the alignment of sustainability within corporate strategy and governance systems. Strategic Management Integration significantly influences Corporate Sustainability Performance ($\beta = 0.531$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that sustainability outcomes are enhanced when embedded within strategic architecture. Although GHRM also directly affects Corporate Sustainability Performance ($\beta = 0.284$), the mediation analysis shows a stronger indirect effect through strategic integration, suggesting partial mediation. The R^2 value of 0.587 indicates that 58.7% of the variance in Corporate Sustainability Performance is explained by the model, demonstrating substantial explanatory power. Overall, the findings support the argument that GHRM contributes to sustainability performance most effectively when integrated into the strategic management framework rather than functioning solely as an operational HR practice.

Discussion

The empirical findings derived from the structural model provide robust support for the central argument of this study: corporate sustainability has evolved into a core strategic orientation, and Green Human Resource Management functions as a critical enabler within a broader strategic management architecture. The results demonstrate that GHRM significantly influences Strategic Management Integration ($\beta = 0.642$), which in turn strongly affects Corporate Sustainability Performance ($\beta = 0.531$). Moreover, the mediation analysis confirms that strategic integration partially mediates the relationship between GHRM and sustainability performance, indicating that the effectiveness of green HR practices is substantially enhanced when embedded within strategic and governance systems. These findings directly address the research objective by clarifying how GHRM

contributes to sustainability outcomes not merely as an operational HR tool, but as a dynamic capability aligned with corporate strategy.

The shift toward sustainable strategic management is well documented in recent literature. Corporate sustainability is no longer confined to CSR initiatives or symbolic reporting but has become embedded in strategic formulation, innovation processes, and performance measurement systems (Bari et al., 2022; Mirea et al., 2025; Thakkar, 2025; Farag, 2025; Nguyen & Kanbach, 2023). The empirical evidence in this study supports this paradigm shift by demonstrating that sustainability performance is significantly influenced by the degree of strategic integration. The R^2 value of 0.587 for Corporate Sustainability Performance indicates substantial explanatory power, reinforcing the argument that sustainability outcomes depend on how deeply they are integrated into organizational strategy. This aligns with the dynamic capabilities perspective, which emphasizes that firms achieve sustained competitive advantage by embedding sustainability within their sensing, seizing, and transforming activities (Bari et al., 2022; Da Rocha et al., 2022; Schulte & Knuts, 2022).

The strong effect of GHRM on Strategic Management Integration suggests that human capital plays a foundational role in operationalizing sustainability strategy. This finding extends prior research that conceptualizes sustainability as a strategic transformation driven by stakeholder pressure, regulatory change, and environmental crises (George & Schillebeeckx, 2022; Settembre-Blundo et al., 2021). While previous studies emphasize external drivers, the present results highlight internal enablers specifically HR systems that translate sustainability commitments into behavioral and organizational routines. In line with Nguyen and Kanbach (2023), sustainability strategy must be supported by organizational capabilities that facilitate alignment across functions. GHRM practices such as green recruitment, training, appraisal, and rewards create a workforce capable of executing sustainability strategies effectively.

The mediation effect of Strategic Management Integration also addresses a key research gap identified in the literature. Much of the existing scholarship treats GHRM and strategic sustainability management as parallel but disconnected domains (Bari et al., 2022; Jamal et al., 2021; Zihan & Makhbul, 2024). By empirically demonstrating partial mediation, this study provides evidence that GHRM contributes most effectively to sustainability performance when embedded within governance, control systems, and ESG-aligned strategy. This supports Hristov et al. (2021) and Beusch et al. (2021), who argue that sustainability must be integrated into management control systems and performance indicators to produce measurable outcomes. The findings indicate that green HR practices influence not only employee behavior but also strategic alignment mechanisms that shape corporate sustainability trajectories.

The positive direct effect of GHRM on Corporate Sustainability Performance ($\beta = 0.284$) confirms previous empirical evidence demonstrating that green HR practices enhance environmental, social, and economic performance dimensions (Jamal et al., 2021; Zihan & Makhbul, 2024; Chreif & Farmanesh, 2022). However, the stronger indirect effect through strategic integration suggests that operational HR initiatives alone are insufficient to maximize sustainability outcomes. This finding reinforces the argument that sustainability must be embedded within a strategic management framework rather than treated as an isolated HR initiative. Li and Li (2025) emphasize that green knowledge sharing and leadership support amplify the impact of GHRM. The present study extends this perspective by showing that strategic alignment functions as a structural amplifier of GHRM effectiveness.

The findings also contribute to debates regarding governance and control systems. Scholars have highlighted inconsistencies in aligning sustainability objectives

with executive incentives, board oversight, and management accounting systems (Hristov et al., 2021; Huliselan, 2025; Aguilera et al., 2021). The significant pathway from Strategic Management Integration to Corporate Sustainability Performance supports the notion that governance mechanisms are central to sustainability success. When GHRM practices are linked to performance appraisal systems, KPIs, and executive incentives, sustainability becomes institutionalized rather than symbolic. This addresses the fragmentation noted in prior research and demonstrates how HR systems can influence governance architecture indirectly through strategic alignment.

Industry 4.0 and digital transformation also play a contextual role in shaping sustainability strategy (Sudha, 2025; George & Schillebeeckx, 2022; Da Rocha et al., 2022). Although not directly measured as a moderator in the structural model, the integration of GHRM within strategic management systems may enhance organizational capacity to leverage digital technologies for green innovation. Da Rocha et al. (2022) argue that digitalization supports sustainability by improving transparency and resource efficiency. The present findings suggest that GHRM strengthens employee capabilities necessary to utilize such technologies effectively. In this sense, green HR practices contribute to dynamic capabilities that enable digital-sustainability convergence.

The results also offer insights into multi-level strategic alignment. Sustainability transformation requires coordination between boards of directors, top management teams, HR departments, and employees (Aguilera et al., 2021; Settembre-Blundo et al., 2021). The strong mediation effect indicates that strategic integration acts as a bridge connecting these organizational levels. GHRM shapes employee competencies and culture, while strategic management systems ensure alignment with corporate objectives. This integrated approach responds to calls for multi-level and longitudinal research on sustainability strategy (Bari et al., 2022; George & Schillebeeckx, 2022). Although the current study employs cross-sectional data, its findings highlight the importance of institutionalized integration mechanisms that sustain competitive advantage over time.

Another important implication concerns risk management and capital allocation. Sustainable strategic management requires firms to incorporate ESG risks into decision-making processes (Thakkar, 2025; Farag, 2025). By embedding sustainability within HR practices and performance evaluation systems, organizations can align employee behavior with risk mitigation objectives. The significant relationship between Strategic Management Integration and sustainability performance suggests that GHRM may indirectly influence capital allocation decisions by shaping strategic priorities. This aligns with the argument of Nguyen and Kanbach (2023) that sustainability strategy must be integrated across organizational subsystems to enhance long-term value creation.

Despite these contributions, the findings also reflect the complexity of contextual variation noted in previous research. Jamal et al. (2021) and Tatasari and Yulfajar (2025) highlight industry-specific differences in the effectiveness of GHRM practices. The relatively moderate direct effect of GHRM on sustainability performance may reflect contextual contingencies such as organizational culture, leadership style, or national institutional frameworks. Chreif and Farmanesh (2022) emphasize that psychological climate and leadership support moderate the GHRM–performance relationship. Although moderation analysis was not the primary focus of this study, the results underscore the need for further research exploring contextual variables within a strategic management framework.

The explanatory power of the model reinforces the integrative approach adopted in this research. By linking GHRM to strategic integration and sustainability performance, the study bridges fragmented research streams and provides empirical evidence

supporting the integration of HR systems within corporate sustainability strategy. This addresses the theoretical gap identified in prior literature, where GHRM is often conceptualized as an operational function rather than a strategic capability (Bari et al., 2022; Jamal et al., 2021). The findings confirm that sustainability-driven competitive advantage depends not only on external positioning but also on internal capability development through HR systems.

In summary, the discussion demonstrates that corporate sustainability performance is significantly enhanced when GHRM is embedded within strategic management architecture. The empirical results validate the argument that sustainability transformation requires alignment among HR practices, governance systems, and strategic objectives. By demonstrating the mediating role of strategic integration, this study provides a theoretically grounded explanation for how green HR practices contribute to sustained competitive advantage. The findings therefore respond directly to the research objective and contribute to advancing a more coherent and integrative perspective at the intersection of strategic management and sustainability research.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that corporate sustainability has firmly transitioned from a peripheral CSR initiative to a core strategic orientation, and Green Human Resource Management plays a pivotal role as a strategic enabler within this transformation. The empirical findings demonstrate that GHRM significantly enhances corporate sustainability performance both directly and, more importantly, indirectly through strategic management integration. The mediation results confirm that green HR practices are most effective when embedded within corporate strategy, governance mechanisms, and management control systems, rather than functioning merely as operational HR activities. By positioning GHRM as a dynamic capability aligned with ESG objectives, risk management, and competitive strategy, this research addresses the fragmentation between sustainability and HRM literature and provides an integrative strategic management perspective. Ultimately, the study affirms that sustained competitive advantage in the era of ESG and stakeholder pressure depends on the institutionalization of green HR practices within the broader strategic architecture of the organization.

IMPLICATIONS

This study offers significant theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the findings strengthen the integration between strategic management and Green Human Resource Management literature by positioning GHRM as a dynamic capability embedded within corporate strategy, governance structures, and management control systems rather than merely an operational HR function. This contributes to the development of a more comprehensive and capability-based model of corporate sustainability performance. Practically, the results provide guidance for top management teams and boards of directors to align GHRM practices with strategic formulation, key performance indicators (KPIs), incentive systems, and ESG-based governance mechanisms. Organizations should design green recruitment, training, performance appraisal, and reward systems strategically to foster sustainable innovation and long-term risk management. By embedding GHRM within the broader strategic architecture, firms can enhance environmental, social, and economic performance while building sustained competitive advantage amid increasing regulatory pressures and stakeholder expectations for responsible business practices.

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