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# ABSTRACT

This study investigates how GHRM facilitates sustainable performance management. Specifically, the study investigates the role of specific GHRM activities on responsible production/consumption, climate action, clear water/sanitation, and sustainable cities. Drawing on secondary literature, the ability, motivation, and opportunity (AMO) model of HRM and the United Nations sustainability development goals (SDG) framework, the study suggests that GHRM can bolster sustainable performance management and thus lead to the attainment of responsible production/consumption, climate action, clear water/sanitation, and sustainable cities. The study extends the

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GHRM literature by uncovering how the SDG framework and the AMO model can interact to facilitate the development and deployment of green skills and bolster the attainment of the environmental dimension of SDGs through green leadership. The practical implications of the findings were discussed.

## INTRODUCTION

Organisations play a vital role in society, such as creating employment opportunities and contributing towards societal development. However, the negative effects of their activities, such as resource depletion as well as water, air, and land pollution, should not be ignored (Ogbeibu et al., 2023). Thus, over the last few decades, organisations are increasingly facing pressure from stakeholders such as the government, non-governmental organisations, society at large, and employees to adopt environmentally friendly policies (Mousa & Othman, 2020). For example, the United Nations' (UN's) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) evidence the universal call to protect the planet. According to Pucik et al. (2023), climate change is arguably the most significant environmental challenge facing humanity, and organisations are facing increasing pressure to be active players in creating solutions to rather than continuing to be part of the problem. If left unchecked, climate change can affect different ecosystems through storms and other types of natural disasters. Therefore, more studies on how organisations can design and execute green practices to achieve the SDGs are required (Pucik et al., 2023).

Many studies suggest that green human resources management (GHRM) is one of the most important approaches to the achievement of the SDGs (Ogbeibu et al., 2023). Green human resources management is defined as 'a set of guidelines and initiatives that inspire environmentally focused behaviours among employees so that they can use their creativity to achieve green innovation outcomes, thus aiding the global cause to engender environmental sustainability' (Ogbeibu et al., 2020, p. 3). Traditional human resources management (HRM) tends to focus on practices that enable organisations to improve their overall business performance and generally do not emphasise the achievement of the SDGs (Ogbeibu et al., 2023). While studies on the relationship between GHRM and environmental performance ('[an] organisation's capability to decrease the waste it produces, as well as its air emission, and limiting the use of hazardous materials, while minimising the frequency of environmental accidents', Mousa & Othman, 2020, p. 4) are becoming more prevalent, some studies (Khaskhely et al., 2022; Martins et al. 2021; Mousa & Othman, 2020; Ogbeibu et al., 2023; Zaid et al., 2018) examine the relationship between GHRM and sustainable performance management. The current study defines 'sustainable performance management' as including activities that managers undertake (or

process) to accomplish set sustainable development goals (Park & Krause, 2021). However, previous studies in this area examine sustainable performance (social, environmental, and economic performance) as an outcome or goal (Khaskhely et al., 2022) rather than as a process (Hernu, 2022) that leads to a sustainable outcome.

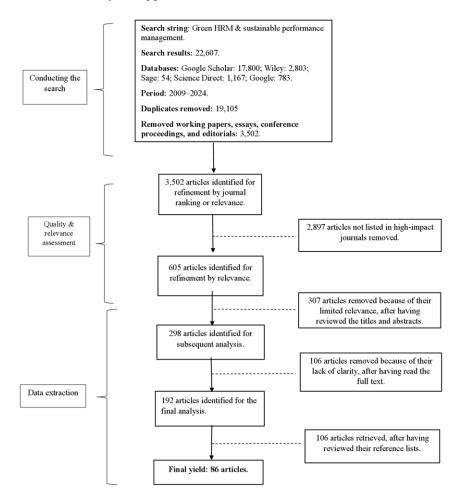
Drawing on the UN's SDGs framework (Pucik et al., 2023); the ability, motivation, and opportunity (AMO) theory of HRM; and a developmental literature review, the current study explores the influence of GHRM on sustainable performance management. In particular, it investigates the role of specific GHRM activities in relation to specific SDGs (responsible production or consumption; climate action; clear water and sanitation; and sustainable cities). It focuses on the environmental dimensions of the SDGs, as there is extant research on how HRM can facilitate the achievement of the social dimensions of SDG, such as by reducing social inequalities (Liu et al., 2022). Using the SDGs framework, the study extends the literature on AMO by highlighting how specific GHRM practices influence the attainment of specific SDGs.

The following section sets out the theoretical framework of the chapter. It outlines how the SDGs framework builds on the AMO model. In the section thereafter, GHRM practices and sustainable performance management are discussed in detail. The final section takes the form of a conclusion.

## METHODOLOGY

An integrated literature review methodology is adopted in the current study to critically examine and synthesise the available literature in order to obtain new insights (Lubbe et al., 2020). The method is appropriate for this study as it has allowed the researchers to go beyond an analysis of extant research findings and provide new insights on the subject: GRHM and sustainable performance management. Below is a visual representation of the stages of the integrated literature review employed in this study.

Figure 1. An outline of the approach taken to the literature search



The first stage of the integrated literature review involves preparing the review plan, in which inclusion and exclusion criteria as well as keywords are determined. The keywords for the literature search were 'green human resources management' and 'sustainable performance management', consistent with the goal of the review.

Using the identified keywords, the researchers conducted a thorough search of relevant databases – online library platforms, like Google, Google Scholar, Wiley, Sage, and Science Direct. The search string focused on GHRM, the SDGs, and sustainable performance management. The search excluded material like conference proceedings, editorials, essays, and working papers. The period of our search was

2009–2024, and the search yielded 3,502 articles, which the researchers imported into Mendeley.

In the second stage, the researchers evaluated the significance and quality of these 3,502 articles. The researchers refined the results further by considering the impact level of the journal as well as the title, abstract, and relevance of each article. A comprehensive review of full articles on studies solely contributing to GHRM and sustainable performance management followed. Furthermore, the researchers assessed the relevance of each article by considering the link between GHRM and sustainable performance management. In addition, the researchers further compartmentalised GHRM and sustainable performance management in order to determine the elements on which the study should focus, such as green hiring, green training, green rewards, green performance management. The combined quality and relevance criteria led to the researchers' selection of articles for the present study. Ultimately, the researchers also checked and included articles from other studies that they deemed relevant. The integrated literature review included 86 articles, as shown in Fig. 1 above.

# **Theoretical Underpinnings**

In 2015, the UN developed the SDGs framework as part of its 2030 agenda for sustainable development. The SDGs framework is a global blueprint on how different stakeholders, including businesses, can protect the planet and its people while creating value for customers in order to make a profit (Pucik et al., 2023). At the heart of the SDGs are the 17 goals that provide significant insights into specific areas that businesses can emphasise in addressing issues of extreme poverty, inequality, and protecting the planet. Figure 2 below shows the UN's SDGs.



Figure 2. The 17 United Nations sustainable development goals

As shown in Figure 2, the 17 SDGs cover social, environmental, and economic issues (Pucik et al., 2023). However, the present study considers only the environmental SDGs: goals 6, 7, 11, 12, and 13, as there is limited research on these goals as they relate to HRM (Ansari et al., 2021; Jabbour et al., 2010; Ogbeibu et al., 2023). Most of the research on SDG and HRM (sustainable) focuses on how HRM can facilitate the achievement of the social (and economic) dimension of SDG, such as reducing inequalities (Adisa et al., 2017; Adisa et al., 2019; Adisa et al., 2021; Aragon-Correa et al., 2013). Businesses must focus on climate change, resource depletion, and environmental degradation to address goals 6, 7, 11, 12, and 13 (environmental dimension). For example, businesses need to achieve carbon neutrality; manufacture products with zero waste; and offer significant maintainability, reparability, and reprocessing opportunities at the end of a product's life - all in order to promote clean sanitation, clean energy, sustainable cities, responsible production and consumption, and climate action (Pucik et al., 2023). While the SDG framework provides a clear roadmap in relation to the areas on which businesses should focus – addressing climate change, resource depletion, and environmental degradation - it does not explain how businesses should develop and engage employees with green skills and competencies in order to meet these goals. The current study does not depend on the SDG framework alone but rather combines it with the AMO model in order to close this research gap.

Source: United Nations, 2024

The ability, motivation, and opportunity model of HRM is mainly applied in research on GHRM and environmental performance (Chams & Garcia-Blandon, 2019; Renwick et al., 2013). According to the AMO model, the sustainability outcomes of a firm can be enhanced when three factors are present: 1. the ability of the business to develop the green knowledge and skills required to engage in the sustainable production process; 2. the necessary motivation and willingness to engage in sustainable practices driven by organisational remuneration and rewards for green behaviour and initiatives; and 3. the business's provision of opportunities for employees to engage and be involved in green and sustainable work processes and contribute to green and sustainable activities in order to foster an eco-friendly atmosphere inside and outside the organisation (Chams & Garcia-Blandon, 2019; Renwick et al., 2013).

Scholars of the AMO model note that GHRM helps create the AMO that employees require in relation to climate change, resource depletion, and environmental degradation (Chams & Garcia-Blandon, 2019; Pucik et al., 2023; Renwick et al., 2013). Ogbeibu et al. (2023) contend that proactive environmental strategies such as GHRM help businesses drive the human capital, motivation, and engagement that employees need in order to enhance the organisation's environmental performance. However, the current literature on GHRM does not extensively explore the environmental dimension of the SDG framework. This study therefore integrates the SDG framework with the AMO model of HRM to explain the relationship between GHRM and sustainable performance management.

## Green Human Resource Management

Green practices help organisations achieve sustainable competitiveness and – if appropriately pursued – ensure a productive work environment that benefits the natural ecosystem (Atiku & Fapohunda; 2020; Martins et al., 2021). Organisations have become aware of the need to have a sustainable environment and are continuously transforming themselves in line with environmentally sustainable goals by adopting and implementing environmentally sustainable practices (Atiku, 2019; 2020), including GHRM, which involves embedding environmental sustainability initiatives into HRM practices. Green hiring, green training, green rewards, and green performance management are examples of such practices. Below is a discussion of how these abovementioned GHRM practices contribute towards a sustainable environment.

## Green Hiring

Green hiring, sometimes also referred to as 'green recruitment', involves hiring employees who have the knowledge, skills, behaviour, and approach to engage in environmental management activities (Yong et al., 2020). For example, green hiring focuses on the recruitment of applicants who are responsive to environmental issues and keen to be proactive in enhancing a firm's environmental performance (Tang et al., 2018).

The practice of green hiring contributes to the achievement of SDGs, such as the attainment of the goals in relation to the enhancement of the sustainability of cities and communities; sustainable production; climate action; clean water and sanitation; and the preservation of life below sea level and on land (Ojo et al., 2022). Green hiring is one of the efforts that businesses make to reduce environmental degradation and promote smart cities. Research shows that forms of automated recruitment processes, such as green interviews (through platforms like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Skype) and online job advertisements (through platforms like LinkedIn, company websites, and other e-career portals) reduce environmental pollution as they negate the need for paper-based job applications and result in the production of fewer gas emissions (which would otherwise be produced from cars when the applicants are travelling to and from interviews) (Dahlmann et al., 2019; Adewumi & Ntshangase, 2022).

Furthermore, the evolving nature of jobs, increasingly incorporating green responsibilities, means that the recruitment and selection criteria for employees also changes. In this context, the selection of employees therefore relates to whether or not they possess green traits, green competencies, and the ability to fit into a green organisational culture. Such green competencies are the capabilities possessed by an individual in relation to how they are able to ensure their organisation's environmental sustainability, and these competencies include the prospective employees' attitudes, awareness, skills, abilities, and knowledge in relation to environmental issues (Priansa, 2016).

Having employees who have green attitudes should be a prerequisite for organisations aiming to attain the SDGs. Green attitudes focus on an individual's positive actions or feelings towards environmental performance. Green attitudes are therefore key factors that cause the pro-environmental behaviour necessary for ensuring overall environmental sustainability (Atiku, 2019; Kim et al., 2019). When hiring employees, organisations should look for candidates who display green attitudes. Selection questions can be used to measure the level at which a prospective employee displays green attitudes. This is particularly important, because it reduces the costs associated with making efforts to change employees' attitudes and behaviours in order to foster a green organisational culture.

Hiring employees with what is known as green awareness enhances environmental sustainability. It increases organisational efficiency, innovation, and environmental performance (Masri & Jaaron, 2017). According to Gadenne et al. (2009), green awareness is a competency that enables employees to think about the impact of their actions on the environment and possibly mitigate any negative impacts.

'Green skills' are the abilities, attitudes, values, and knowledge required for developing and supporting a sustainable and resource-efficient society (United Nations Industrial Development Organisation [UNIDO], 2022). Similarly, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (2012) defines 'green skills' as the values, attitudes, abilities, and knowledge required to support a society intending to reduce the effects of human activity on the environment.

Furthermore, 'green knowledge' is an important attribute of environmental sustainability (Atiku, 2020). Fryxell and Lo (2003) define 'green knowledge' as the facts that one has about the natural environment and the entire ecosystem. It is concerned with one's capacity to understand environmental issues and be able to act upon them. Green hiring, if done correctly, provides the foundation upon which other green HRM practices (such as green training and development; green performance management; and green rewards) can be based. When practising green hiring, organisations should focus on identifying the candidates who possess green competencies. Their selection questions should be able to elicit the level of green competencies. Thus, organisations are increasingly aligning their job roles and job descriptions with environmental issues, and when they advertise positions, they are becoming more focused on recruiting the candidates who are the most focused on environmental issues (Chaudhary, 2018).

# Green Training

Green training plays a key role in the attainment of the global SDGs, and it also gives a competitive advantage to organisations. Green training involves equipping employees with the necessary skills, abilities, and knowledge to aid in the reduction of environmental degradation, conservation of energy, sufficient resource utilisation, and the reduction of waste during the production process (Lawal & Olawoyin, 2021). Green training therefore enhances employees' knowledge and skills in relation to environmental sustainability by creating positive attitudes among employees and encouraging their participation in green initiatives. In other words, green training equips employees with the competencies necessary for attaining the sustainability objectives of an organisation. Organisations that are conscious of their green objectives undertake green training needs analyses in order to identify and establish

appropriate training initiatives that will help them achieve their green objectives (Arulrajah et al., 2015). Equipping employees with green knowledge and skills is important, because employees with these competencies perform their jobs in an environmentally friendly way. Green training programmes improve employees' knowledge and understanding of the significance of addressing green issues, making them more concerned about increasing their awareness of environmental protection (Fields & Atiku, 2017; 2018; Joshi & Dhar, 2020). Green training therefore lays the foundation for a green organisational culture.

Ramlee (2015) explains that training and education in green skills are important for transforming an economy into a green economy and for ensuring the clean environment required for overall economic growth. A workforce endowed with green skills supports organisations' achievement of their sustainable goals and the green economy at large. The proliferation of green technology is contributing to the fourth industrial revolution, characterised by new green jobs. Equipping employees with green skills is thus a necessity for a sustainable green economy. The establishment of educational institutions and government initiatives are therefore crucial for cultivating the necessary green skills for a green economy.

According to Heong et al. (2016), economies are increasingly shifting to the use of green-conscious economic models in the job market. As such, new green jobs have emerged. For example, in the automobile manufacturing industry, new jobs focusing on fuel-efficient technologies have emerged. Such technology is in line with global SDGs like reducing pollution; ensuring cities and communities are sustainable; ensuring energy is affordable and clean; and promoting life on land and below sea level. These changes in the job market have resulted in changes in workforce skills. Thus, organisations need to train employees in order to improve their green skills. Training institutions also need to revise or change their curricula to include green training. In this way, the goal of making economies green can be achieved, as the labour market will have employees with green skills (Teixeira et al., 2016).

The development of employees' skills is not enough for achieving green goal. Managers of organisations should possess green leadership skills. Leaders who have green skills are able to consider and deal with sustainability issues from a strategic point of view. Consequently, their organisations will benefit from their improved competitive advantage gained through a reduction in costs, a good corporate reputation, a culture of continuous improvement, and increased employee motivation (Yang et al., 2010). Promoting environmental sustainability therefore requires the commitment of all employees, regardless of their rank. As such, it is crucial for leaders to have the necessary green skills and green leadership skills to enhance employees' commitment as well as strengthen the culture necessary for implementing environmental management initiatives (Teixeira et al., 2016; Perron et al., 2006).

## Green Rewards

GHRM practices support pro-environmental behaviour, which can be defined as the routines and actions that individuals implement to promote sustainable practices and reduce their negative impact on the environment (Woo, 2021). Offering employees green rewards is one way of embedding pro-environmental behaviour in organisational culture. Green rewards are the financial and non-financial rewards given to employees in order to encourage their pro-environmental behaviour. When employees are rewarded for their pro-environmental efforts, they are likely to continue engaging in behaviours that support their organisation in attaining its environmental performance objectives (Saeed et al., 2019). According to the AMO model, employees are motivated to perform well when they are rewarded for exhibiting appropriate or valued behaviours (Rayner & Morgan, 2018). When organisations recognise and appraise employees' green behaviour as well as connect it to their pay or promotional opportunities, employees feel encouraged and become more involved in the green initiatives at their organisations (Dumont et al., 2017).

Rewarding green competencies is important for attracting, engaging, and retaining employees and for achieving sustainable objectives. Employees feel valued when they know that organisations recognise the green skills and other competencies they have acquired over the years. Renwick et al. (2013) state that organisations should consider competence-based reward schemes for employees who acquire the essential green competencies for mitigating environmental threats, workplace accidents, and illegal gas emissions. In order to attain the global SDGs, such as the promotion of smart cities and communities; the provision of affordable and clean energy; and industry, innovation and infrastructure, organisations and governments need to implement policies that reward skills that increase sustainable development. In the words of Olanipekun et al. (2017), green rewards serve as a motivational factor for stakeholders in the construction industry, such as contractors, consultants, designers, and private developers, to spearhead the construction of green buildings and infrastructures. This initiative can be seen in Australia, where the government provides incentives for the promotion of the construction of green buildings (Steinfeld et al., 2011). Likhitkar and Verma (2017) argue that employees should be given green rewards for acquiring new environmental management skills. When employees use their green skills and knowledge to innovate, they need to be rewarded with awards and bonuses for using their skills and displaying environmentally friendly behaviour (Suharti & Sugiarto, 2020). Furthermore, green reward schemes require managerial support. When managers take the lead in supporting green initiatives, employees also value the initiatives. A study undertaken by Cantor et al. (2012) reveals that not only do employees value the presence of pro-environmental rewards, but they also value managerial and organisational support. Dumont (2015) adds that managers

should specifically reward employees who are engaging in green behaviours in order to demonstrate their intention to foster green culture and encourage employees to engage in green behaviours, which will contribute to the achievement of those goals.

# Green Employee Involvement

Working towards the attainment of organisational sustainable development goals requires higher levels of employee involvement. Green employee involvement is when employees involve themselves in activities and actions promoting environmental sustainability. Danirmala and Prajogo (2022) define 'green employee involvement' as the provision of employees with the opportunities to learn green skills and participate in environmentally friendly strategies developed to combat environmental problems. Thus, it is a strategy used by organisations to include employees in environmental sustainability issues. Renwick et al. (2013) state that green employee involvement is a management and work practice designed to provide employees with opportunities to contribute to environmental sustainability issues.

Some researchers argue that employees who possess important knowledge and expertise regarding environmental sustainability initiatives should be highly involved in spearheading such initiatives (Tang et al., 2018; Renwick et al., 2013; Sanyal & Haddock-Millar, 2018). The achievement of green objectives relies heavily on the performance of employees, as they are responsible for implementing most environmental sustainability initiatives. Notably, employees are responsible for the daily implementation of environmental sustainability initiatives such as turning off the lights, recycling waste material, powering down electronics, and efficient resource utilisation (Boiral et al., 2015). The implementation of these activities mostly depends on employees; therefore, managers must focus on involving employees in environmental sustainability tasks (Renwick et al., 2013).

Renwick et al. (2013) argue that there are three important processes through which green employee involvement influences environmental sustainability: 1. harnessing employees' tacit knowledge, as they are responsible for implementing the production processes; 2. making contributions regarding environmental improvements; and 3. developing and maintaining a culture that supports environmental sustainability goals. Other researchers suggest several ways through which employee involvement can be encouraged, such as forming problem-solving groups, celebrating low-carbon champions, implementing work-based recycling schemes, producing and distributing green bulletins proposing eco-initiatives, establishing green teams, and instituting other formal and informal communication channels to promote green employee involvement (Tang et al. 2018; Renwick et al., 2013).

## Green Performance Appraisal

Green performance appraisal is another significant GRHM practice for promoting sustainable development. According to Ardiza et al. (2021), green performance appraisal involves evaluating the progress of employees in achieving a green environment. In other words, green performance appraisals focus on assessing employees' performance based on set green standards. Anton (2016) posits that it considers the results produced by employees when they engage in actions related to greening the environment. The idea behind green performance appraisals is therefore to motivate employees to display the necessary behaviours for the attainment of green organisational goals.

Deshwal (2015) comments that organisational performance management systems should incorporate green targets in their key performance areas, which can then be decoded into green behaviour and performance standards, which act as measures of performance at all levels in the organisation. Saeed et al. (2019) state that organisations can develop green performance indicators or criteria upon which all members of the organisation can be evaluated. These indicators can include tasks related to ensuring that environmental responsibilities, including workplace incidents, are adequately addressed.

Organisations aiming to achieve green excellence conduct employee performance evaluations based on their adherence to green practices and standards (Yong et al., 2019). Essentially, these evaluations focus on measuring the extent to which green knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awareness are being used and displayed in organisations. Organisations then reward or use other interventions to reinforce the use of these competencies. In other words, green performance appraisals impact how green competencies are utilised and how green rewards are distributed in organisations. Through green performance appraisals, when employees lack green competencies, relevant green training and development can be prescribed. This approach not only motivates employees but also fosters a green organisational culture. The motivation component of the AMO model suggests that continuous evaluation and feedback regarding the attainment of green goals motivates employees to involve themselves in tasks related to green goals (Reinholt et al., 2011).

Most researchers argue that GHRM is a means of achieving sustainable performance management (Park & Krause, 2021; Noordiatmoko & Riyadi, 2023), which can be defined as performance management that focuses on the accomplishment of developmental outcomes and leads to sustainable development (Park & Krause, 2021). As much as performance management deals with operational aspects of HRM, like performance planning, employee appraisals, and giving rewards, it is different to sustainable performance management in that sustainable performance

management focuses on the attainment of sustainable developmental goals (Noordiatmoko & Riyadi, 2023).

## Sustainable Performance Management

Sustainable performance management involves the work-related activities that managers undertake to achieve their established sustainable development goals (Park & Krause, 2021), consistent with the global SDGs. Sustainable performance management goes beyond the usual performance management practices. Thus, traditional HRM may not be able to effectively bolster sustainable performance management. Notably, sustainable performance management is committed to the principles of the global SDGs in all aspects of operations. This means considering not just profit but also the business's impact on the environment and society. In this case, it is crucial that environmentally friendly practices are aligned with the global SDGs; specifically, responsible production or consumption; climate action; clean water and sanitation; the enhancement of the sustainability of cities and communities; and the promotion of people's good health and wellbeing.

This management approach focuses on the use of metrics, including key performance indicators (KPIs) related to responsible production or consumption; climate action; the provision of clean water and sanitation; and the enhancement of the sustainability of cities and communities in setting employees' work objectives and assessing their performance against these objectives to drive organisation environmental performance. This comprehensive approach includes setting clear goals and supporting employees through training, rewards, and engagement in order to achieve such goals through strategies such as management by objectives.

# The Performance Management Cycle

The performance management cycle is the process of planning, measuring, evaluating, rewarding, and adjusting employees' tasks and activities to achieve business goals. From a sustainability perspective, the performance management cycle integrates the global SDGs into the process, and this process needs to be planned and executed with the support of senior managers. The process usually begins with setting objectives that are realistic, measurable, and achievable (Pauwe et al., 2023). Examples of such business objectives might be to limit the organisation's carbon footprint by promoting employees' use of public transportation, cycling, and carpooling to promote sustainable cities and communities. Then, these objectives can be developed into KPIs that can be used to measure progress and identify any issues.

The next step in the performance management cycle involves monitoring and supporting employees in order to achieve set objectives – monitoring if the employees are working sufficiently smart and hard to meet the specific KPIs. If they are not, greater support and interventions can be introduced in the form of training and development; rewards; and engagement. Rewards, both financial and non-financial, are necessary for motivating employees and maintaining their high performance. They can reinforce proactive behaviours that lead to the achievement of goals such as responsible consumption or production and can lead to changes in unacceptable behaviour.

In the final stage of the performance management cycle, employees' performance is measured to assess their contribution towards the sustainable objectives set in the first instance through the collection of qualitative and quantitative data on the performance of the individual employees. This can be further deployed to make informed HR decisions. For employees who may not have fully adhered to sustainability goals, the performance management cycle provides a structured approach to address areas of improvement, and it may be necessary to discipline such employees, giving them constructive feedback (Ciemleja & Lace, 2011). Learning what went right and needs improvement as well as facilitating continuous improvement during the next performance cycle are strategic issues. In the case of sustainable performance management, it is argued herein that the focus of the three main stages discussed above is how to facilitate environmental performance.

## Why Use Sustainable Performance Management?

A critical goal of sustainable performance management is that it supports the design and implementation of GHRM. Sustainable performance management helps managers set clear sustainability objectives (in relation to combating climate change, resource depletion, and environmental degradation) and support the achievement thereof correctly through training, rewards, and engagement (Pucik et al., 2023). Moreover, sustainable performance management facilitates the collection of data that can help an organisation understand and improve its HRM strategy; for example, sustainable performance management can help managers identify training, rewards, and engagement gaps (Ciemleja & Lace, 2011) and suggest possible ways on how to address the gaps to enhance sustainable performance. Organisations that engage in sustainable performance management can identify the training needs of managers so that they can become leaders who are committed to sustainability and thus achieve organisational goals in relation to responsible production or consumption; climate action; clean water and sanitation; the enhancement of the sustainability of cities and communities; and promoting good health and wellbeing (Montiel et al., 2021). When it is implemented correctly, sustainable performance management provides

managers with insights into how to develop the appropriate green competencies among employees and motivate them to act in environmentally responsible ways in order to drive environmental performance (Dumont et al., 2017; Morioka & de Carvalho, 2016).

Notably, organisations that engage in sustainable performance management can ensure that they achieve the SDGs in relation to climate action; clean water and sanitation; and the enhancement of the sustainability of cities and communities – and even exceed them (Ciemleja & Lace, 2011). This is crucial for organisations to safeguard and enhance their brand image as well as protect them against fines and legal proceedings. On the one hand, when an organisation complies with environmental regulations, it can achieve higher profits and a healthier return on investment, demonstrating the business case for achieving the UN's SDGs than it would otherwise be able to do (Montiel et al., 2021). For example, when a business is known to engage in environmentally sustainable practices, it can generate more customers, leading to greater profit maximisation than it would otherwise achieve (Pucik et al., 2023). On the other hand, sustainable performance management can help organisations attract and retain talent in the competitive job market (Renwick et al., 2013). Workplaces that embrace environmental sustainability are characterised by low employee turnover rates, which results in low staff turnover costs, which can significantly contribute to overall HR cost savings. Retaining staff is necessary in order for an organisation to avoid challenges such as skills shortages. Moreover, high levels of job satisfaction at an organisation mean that there is also a low level of absenteeism there. There is evidence that employees have high levels of job satisfaction in a sustainable workplace, and this can lead to enhanced performance, which can benefit the wider organisation (Renwick et al., 2023). This in turn can generate other positive developments, such as improved collaboration and innovation, which will benefit the organisation in terms of product development and the quality of outputs.

Finally, a manager who engages in sustainable performance management is able to gain a thorough understanding of whether their organisation is attaining its goals through HR, particularly goals related to climate action, as exemplified by Morioka and de Carvalho (2016). Moreover, the indicators provide managers with insights into the effectiveness of their organisation's environmental sustainability strategies, including its HRM strategy. The current study argues that while sustainable performance management is useful for achieving the abovementioned goals – it can only do so through well-designed and well-implemented GHRM practices. While traditional HRM plays an important role in performance management processes, the current study argues that it may not be able to support sustainable performance management. The reason is that traditional HRM is limited in terms of its support

for environmental performance according to Ogbeibu et al. (2023). Thus, the study now explores the impact of GHRM on sustainable performance management.

# The Relationship between Green Human Resource Management and Sustainable Performance Management

The concept of GHRM plays an important role in shaping an organisation's commitment to sustainability, and it focuses on environmentally responsible practices in HRM. When seeking to drive sustainability goals, sustainable performance management can facilitate the planning, monitoring, and improvement of GHRM efforts.

Hiring high-quality employees who have green values and skills is a key challenge in the current war for talent (Renwick et al., 2013). Thus, efforts to drive sustainable performance management through GHRM should start with the green hiring of employees who have green human capital and values after setting clear environmental objectives, such as combating climate change. Through green hiring efforts, organisations seeking to combat climate change, resource depletion, and environmental degradation through their production and work processes can attract employees with green human capital (Atiku, 2020). According to Renwick et al. (2013), organisations can use green hiring practices in order to attract qualified employees who have the necessary green skills to drive the work and production processes relevant to combating climate change, resource depletion, and environmental degradation. Job descriptions and person specifications should clearly describe the green aspects of the relevant job in terms of how to work and produce in ways that combat climate change, resource depletion, and environmental degradation in order to promote the establishment of smart cities and to obtain the human capital required to achieve the same.

According to Debrah et al. (2018), employers should help new and long-serving employees sharpen their skills, regardless of their experience level, to help them develop firm-specific human capital. Thus, the current study suggests that organisations seeking to achieve the environmental dimension of the SDGs should design and implement green training programmes to help all employees develop the green skills they require to work in ways that will combat resource depletion, climate change, and environmental degradation (Pucik et al., 2023), because having a positive impact on the environment is now regarded as a responsibility for all employees. Notably, training in the development of skills in energy-efficient technologies is important (Ogbeibu et al., 2023). Research undertaken by Renwick et al. (2013) suggests that environmental knowledge and values are important predictors of personal behaviours. Consistent with the AMO model, developing environmental leaders is also important for driving sustainable performance management through GHRM. In the words of Renwick et al. (2013), it is important for organisations to

develop green leadership skills among their managers, who should possess personal environmentally friendly values. With this, managers can provide relevant support for setting clear work objectives with employees, providing relevant training and engagement at work. It is anticipated that with the right managerial and leadership support, employees can take sustainability initiatives (Renwick et al., 2013).

In order to effectively practice sustainable performance management, skilled employees should be provided with opportunities to engage in green activities and work processes that will address resource depletion, climate change, and environmental degradation. This can be achieved through green employee involvement practices, such as a green suggestion scheme that enables employees to suggest ideas that can drive the development of smart cities. During green engagement, leaders with green skills can monitor employees to provide relevant support in the form of real-time feedback. In this way, mistakes are not made before they are identified during appraisals in the last stage in the sustainable performance management cycle (Oseghale et al., 2018).

Additionally, green reward schemes should be implemented in order to encourage the green behaviours and values that are appreciated by organisations. In this vein, Ogbeibu et al. (2023) posit that employees are motivated to apply their green knowledge and competencies at work in order to tackle issues of climate change, resource depletion, and environmental degradation. In line with the AMO model, having the relevant green skills and competencies is not enough. Rather, the transfer of such skills and learning to the workplace is critical (Debrah et al., 2018) for driving relevant SDGs. In the last stage of sustainable performance management, green appraisals can be deployed to measure employees' contributions to the attainment of the relevant sustainable development goals as outlined in the employees' work objectives. Following appraisal, employees who are contributing to the attainment of sustainable development goals should be rewarded accordingly. However, those who are not contributing much to the attainment of these goals should be supported by giving them timely feedback and by providing them with effective green training and development. The use of constant reprimands and cautions should be avoided. According to Ogbeibu et al. (2023) and Renwick et al. (2013), the use of negative reinforcement does not educate staff.

# DISCUSSION

This study sought to explore the influence of GHRM on sustainable performance management and to identify the role of specific GHRM activities on the achievement of SDGs, such as the enhancement of the sustainability of cities and communities; sustainable production; climate action; clean water and sanitation; and the

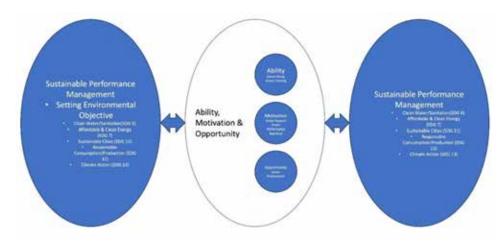
preservation of life below sea level and on land. The study found that GHRM (not traditional HRM) can drive sustainable performance management through green hiring, training, involvement, and performance appraisals to develop and deploy the green competencies and behaviour required to address climate change, resource depletion, and environmental degradation. However, the study also uncovered that sustainable performance management is a key driver of GHRM. The need for sustainable performance management will drive organisations to implement effective GHRM practices to bolster the attainment of key sustainable development goals.

Driven by the need to pursue sustainability goals, the study findings show that organisations hire green talent/human capital. However, the study revealed that having employees with relevant green competencies is not enough in the sustainable performance management process. Rather, organisations must ensure that the right green reward systems and support systems, including green appraisal systems and leadership, are in place in order to drive an effective sustainable performance management process through GHRM. Regarding green reward schemes, the extant literature suggests that many organisations only provide green rewards for their leaders and senior workers at the expense of other employees (Renwick et al., 2013). While previous work suggests that this approach is effective (Renwick et al., 2013), the current study found that such practices may be counterproductive. All employees are responsible for driving sustainability in the workplace and should therefore be encouraged, through green reward schemes, to deploy their green skills. According to the AMO model, having the relevant skills (green, in this case) is not enough (Debrah et al., 2018), as deploying such skills and behaviours is equally important.

## CONCLUSION

From a theoretical standpoint, the current study advances the extant literature on GHRM in that it highlights how GHRM influences sustainable performance management and vice versa. While existing literature provides insights into how traditional HRM drives performance management, this is the first study to consider how GHRM drives sustainable performance management. We extend the UN's SDG framework by articulating how the AMO model can facilitate the development and deployment of green skills and bolster the attainment of the environmental dimension of the SDGs through green leadership. Practically speaking, organisations seeking to address climate change, resource depletion, and environmental degradation to drive smart cities should draw on these GHRM practices to develop an effective sustainable performance management system. Based on this discussion, the researchers have developed a conceptual framework highlighting the sustainable performance management and GHRM nexus (Figure 3).

*Figure 3. The green human resources management and sustainable performance management nexus* 



# Limitations and Directions for Future Research

While the current study makes several key contributions to the current literature on GHRM, it has one major limitation that future research can address: The study has focused on theory expansion without providing any empirical evidence to support the claims made. Thus, it is suggested that future work on GHRM and sustainable performance management should collect empirical data to test the arguments presented in this study.

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# **KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

**Green Hiring:** Green hiring involves hiring employees who have the necessary knowledge, skills, and behaviour for attaining environmentally sustainable goals.

Green Human Resource Management: Green human resource management involves embedding environmental sustainability initiatives into human resource management practices.

**Green Performance Appraisal:** This involves evaluating an employee's performance based on their adherence to and achievement of set sustainable development performance indicators.

**Green Rewards:** These are rewards given to employees for displaying and achieving sustainable development performance indicators.

**Green Training:** Green training involves equipping employees with the necessary knowledge and skills to perform sustainable tasks in an organisation.

**Sustainable Development Goals:** They provide the blueprint for the achievement and attainment of a sustainable future.

**Sustainable Performance Management:** These are the activities that management performs to achieve set sustainable development goals.