

Implementing Green Human Resource Management in Local Government: Evidence from Bogor City, Indonesia

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Abstract

The rising concern over environmental sustainability has heightened the significance of incorporating Green Management principles into organizational management, particularly in the public sector. This study aims to investigate the implementation of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices by the Bogor City Government, Indonesia, and identify strategies for improvement. The study adopted a qualitative descriptive method, where data were collected through in-depth interviews of key informants from various local government agencies, supported by document analysis and observation. The study identified the five main aspects of GHRM, which are Green Recruitment and Selection, Green Training and Development, Green Performance Management, Green Compensation and Reward, and Green Employee Involvement. The study found that the implementation of GHRM practices by the Bogor City Government is partial, implicit, and informal. Although there are attempts to implement GHRM practices, such as digitalization, eco-offices, and employee participation, the incorporation of Green Management principles into HRM is lacking. The main problems identified are the low level of environmental competencies of civil servants, the lack of environmental performance indicators, and inadequate incentive mechanisms. The paper makes a contribution to the body of knowledge on sustainable public management by bringing to the fore the micro-level human resource issues in developing countries and providing recommendations on the institutionalization of GHRM.

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1. Introduction

The awareness of the world about the degradation of the environment, climate change, and resource depletion has put sustainability on the top agenda of the 21st century. International agreements like the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations have called upon governments worldwide to incorporate environmental concerns into policy-making and management. In Indonesia, this commitment is manifested in the country's national development plans, such as the National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN) 2025-2045 and the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2025-2029, which focus on green growth and the development of a green workforce. As public sector organizations are at the forefront of implementing policies and providing public services, their capacity to adopt sustainability principles is important for achieving global and national environmental goals

Human Resource Management (HRM) has now been identified as a means to achieve organizational sustainability as it has a direct impact on environmental performance due to its influence on individuals' knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. Thus, a new concept named Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has been introduced as a means to incorporate

environmental values into HRM practices such as recruiting, selection, training, development, performance management, rewards, and involvement (Faeni et al., 2026; Jackson et al., 2011).

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) is a revolutionary strategic approach that links organizational human resources with environmental sustainability, particularly in the public sector and education sector. Recent scientific research has highlighted that GHRM is instrumental in catalyzing circular economy performance in the public sector, particularly by incorporating green practices with inclusive leadership styles. This is often achieved via the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity framework, where HR strategies are aligned with leadership styles to enhance sustainability performance even in resource-scarce public sector contexts. Furthermore, previous study in higher education institutions reveal that GHRM practices—such as green hiring and training—positively influence green innovation and environmental sustainability performance (Kutieshat & Farmanesh, 2022).

The effectiveness of GHRM implementation in public-facing industries is significantly influenced by internal psychological and cultural factors. Research shows that GHRM can contribute to a pro-environmental corporate culture, which acts as a bridge between organizational HR strategies and carbon footprint reduction, as in the aviation healthcare industry (Ali et al., 2024; Ly, 2025; Tandon et al., 2023). Within the university setting, the existence of a strong 'Green Culture' would facilitate the 'Green Values' of staff members, which would make the 'Green Values' more effective drivers of innovation and excellence in the 'Green'. It would ensure the 'Green' initiatives are not formalistic but are integrated into the 'psychology' of the organization.

In addition, literature emphasizes the fact that the effect of GHRM goes beyond organizational performance to fulfilling the requirements of all stakeholders in the context of the wider environment and sociopolitical needs. Public sector managers are now recognized as important agents in the environment, and their awareness of this can be seen to translate into the implementation of effective sustainable practices through the mechanism of GHRM. Thus, through the implementation of environmentally friendly employee behaviors and skill deficiency upskilling initiatives, organizations can successfully transform from linear to circular economies. Ultimately, the combination of GHRM, supporting leadership, and green organizational identity provides public sector organizations with a strong route to deliver environmental common goods.

Prior research on GHRM has extensively examined its role in enhancing organizational performance and environmental outcomes (Arshad & Liu, 2025), with studies synthesizing findings that green recruitment, training, performance management, compensation, and employee involvement collectively boost sustainability and competitiveness. For instance, some of previous studies (Din et al., 2025; Jackson et al., 2011; Li et al., 2024) conceptualized GHRM as a framework integrating environmental values into HR processes, while El-kassar & Kumar (2017) and Mamun (2026) empirically linked it to improved environmental performance in organizations. Ly (2025) and Sánchez-García et al., (2025) further demonstrated its positive impact on public sector efficiency, emphasizing how green competencies enhance service delivery. These studies collectively reveal that GHRM not only reduces ecological footprints but also drives innovation and employee engagement, though most focus on private sectors or general contexts, leaving public administration underexplored.

However, the actual implementation of GHRM in public sector organizations can face substantial structural and cultural challenges, especially in developing nations. Inflexibility in the bureaucracy, lack of leadership support, poor environmental competencies of the public service workforce, and resource limitations can often impede successful implementation (Ogbeibu et al., 2021; Salehzadeh & Ziaean, 2024). In most nations, public sector organizations have traditionally been more concerned with administrative compliance and accountability than with performance for sustainability, creating a mismatch between environmental policy pledges and organizational practices (Abbasi et al., 2022; Boselie et al., 2019; Pynes, 2013). Furthermore, the current body of GHRM literature has been mostly concerned with private sector organizations or developed nations, leaving local government organizations in developing nations relatively unexamined.

Despite the ever-increasing literature on Green Human Resource Management (GHRM), there is still a lack of empirical studies on the implementation of GHRM in public sector organizations, particularly in developing countries such as Indonesia. Bogor City is a relevant case to explore the

implementation of GHRM in public sector organizations. The relevance of this case stems from the fact that Bogor City is facing various environmental challenges, including waste management, flooding, and air pollution. On the other hand, the city has also implemented sustainability initiatives under the Bogor Green City initiative. The effectiveness of sustainability initiatives relies on the preparedness of public servants to embrace green values and apply them to their work practices. In this context, this study was conducted to explore regional apparatus organizations (OPDs) as case studies of the implementation of GHRM in public sector organizations. The purpose of this study was to analyze the current implementation of GHRM in the Bogor City Government and to identify efforts to optimize the implementation of GHRM in public sector organizations. The emphasis of micro-level human resource processes in a developing country adds to the literature of sustainable public management and offers useful insights for green governance development. A qualitative methodology was used to obtain rich insights from key informants to better understand the challenges and facilitators of implementation.

2. Methods

This study used a qualitative descriptive research design and employed a case study approach to investigate the implementation of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) in the Bogor City Government. The use of a qualitative approach was considered suitable for this research study since its purpose was exploratory and focused on understanding processes and perceptions related to GHRM implementation. This study was also based on a naturalistic inquiry without manipulating variables, which allowed for a deeper and more detailed examination of GHRM implementation.

This research study was conducted in some regional apparatus organizations (Organisasi Perangkat Daerah or OPD) of Bogor City that play significant roles in human resource management, environmental management, planning, and finance. The study population was employees and officials working in key OPD of Bogor City, Indonesia, where some important institutions are located, such as the Human Resources Development Agency (BKPSDM), Environmental Agency (DLH), Regional Development Planning Agency (BAPPERIDA), Regional Revenue Agency (BAPENDA), and Regional Financial and Asset Agency (BKAD). A total of 15 key informants were used for this study, which represented different functional areas relevant to this research study.

Data was collected from different sources to enhance its credibility. The main data was collected through a semi-structured interview technique with open-ended questions on five important dimensions of GHRM: green selection/recruitment, green training/development, green performance management, green compensation/reward systems, and green employee involvement. The secondary data was collected through a document analysis technique on different dimensions of local regulations, strategic planning, performance reports, and internal organizational documents on human resource management and green issues. Observations were also conducted to gain insights into the daily operations of eco-offices on sustainability topics.

The research adopted a systematic approach that entailed a literature review, selection of key informants, data collection, and data analysis. The application of an interactive approach to data analysis, which entailed data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, was employed to discern prominent features of GHRM implementation. The credibility of the data was ensured, and the research was deemed reliable and replicable in similar settings in the public sector.

3. Results and Discussion

The current state of the implementation of the concept of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) in the Bogor City Government can be characterized as formative and transitional, with a focus on the overall concept of the "Bogor Green City." The macro-level policy in the city can be considered to have been successfully implemented in the form of a strong policy

framework that emphasizes the importance of environmental sustainability, from the banning of the use of plastic bags to the development of green spaces in the city. However, these macro-level aspirations towards the environment have not yet been fully translated to the micro-level functions in the city government, with the overall practices in the government bureaucracy characterized by a sense of fragmentation, where green practices coexist with traditional practices without a strategic bridge.

In the field of talent acquisition and development, the Bogor City Government has achieved remarkable milestones in its digitalization of its recruitment and internal communication practices. This is, of course, a natural consequence of embracing "e-government," which is a move toward a more environmentally friendly office policy. However, it is also important to note that this "green" approach to recruitment is more a byproduct of digitalization than a GHRM strategy. The environmental skills and values are not yet integrated into the job descriptions and selection criteria, and hence, the organization cannot yet capitalize on the possibility of building a workforce that is intrinsically motivated to contribute to the environment.

Currently, the organizational capacity-building initiatives, especially through green training and development, are done in an ad hoc manner. Even though there are instances where the Environmental Agency, as well as some departments in planning, regularly conduct green training and development in matters concerning waste management and climate change, there is a lack of a single curriculum that encompasses green literacy for all civil servants in various departments. This has resulted in a disparity in the understanding and execution of green policies, hence a need to adopt a more holistic approach in human resource development.

The behavioral aspects of GHRM in Bogor are largely driven by individual initiatives and informal office cultures rather than institutionalized systems. While many employees actively participate in routine green practices such as energy conservation and waste segregation, these actions are not yet supported by a formal green performance appraisal or a structured reward system. The absence of measurable environmental indicators in periodic evaluations means that eco-friendly behaviors remain voluntary and lack long-term institutional accountability. To evolve beyond this early stage, the Bogor City Government faces the challenge of institutionalizing these organic efforts into a comprehensive HR framework that recognizes and incentivizes environmental stewardship as a core professional responsibility. Based on the findings regarding Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) in the Bogor City Government, the following development expands the results into a comprehensive and humanized academic discussion:

The implementation of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) within the Bogor City Government is currently characterized by an early and fragmented development stage. While the city has made commendable strides in establishing macro-level environmental policies and broad "green city" initiatives, a significant gap remains in translating these high-level goals into micro-level human resource practices. At present, the integration of ecological principles into the daily management of civil servants is largely informal and lacks a cohesive strategic framework. This suggests that while the political will for a greener city exists, the internal administrative mechanisms have yet to fully catch up, leaving green initiatives as external goals rather than internal organizational values.

Regarding the entry point of the workforce, green recruitment and selection processes remain largely conventional. Although the city has successfully digitized its recruitment platforms—thereby reducing paper waste and aligning with eco-friendly logistics—this transition is more of a technological byproduct than a deliberate GHRM strategy. Environmental competencies and green values are not yet formally embedded into job descriptions or candidate evaluation criteria. Consequently, the organization misses critical opportunities to attract and select individuals who possess a pre-existing commitment to sustainability, echoing a common challenge in the public sector where recruitment criteria are often rigid and slow to adapt to emerging environmental needs.

Furthermore, the area of green training and development shows a lack of systematic integration across the various regional apparatus organizations (OPD). While environmental training exists, it is often conducted on an ad hoc basis, primarily driven by the Environmental Agency or planning-related departments that rely on central government programs. Because these initiatives are not woven into the broader HR development strategy for all civil servants, the

resulting capacity building is uneven. This fragmentation prevents the development of a unified green mindset across the bureaucracy, as environmental literacy remains concentrated in specific silos rather than becoming a cross-functional competency.

One of the most significant hurdles identified is the lack of a structured green performance management and compensation system. Currently, performance appraisals do not include measurable environmental indicators, which fundamentally weakens accountability and fails to provide a clear incentive for pro-environmental behavior. Without these formal metrics, employees are less likely to prioritize sustainability in their daily tasks. Similarly, reward mechanisms remain symbolic or informal at best. The absence of a structured compensation system—whether through financial incentives or formal career recognition—limits the long-term sustainability of green initiatives, as motivation relies heavily on individual goodwill rather than institutional support.

Despite these challenges, green employee involvement stands out as a relatively stronger dimension, evidenced by the adoption of routine eco-friendly habits such as waste segregation and paperless office practices. However, even this involvement is currently more reflective of individual commitment and specific office cultures rather than being a result of institutionalized decision-making processes. For GHRM to truly mature in Bogor's public sector, there is a clear need to move beyond these voluntary actions. Transforming these isolated efforts into a participative governance model where employees are actively involved in shaping environmental policy would ensure that sustainability becomes a permanent fixture of the city's administrative identity.

This pattern aligns closely with the observations of Jabbour and De Sousa Jabbour (2016), who highlight that employee involvement often remains superficial when it lacks a deeper cultural shift within the organization. Without addressing these systemic gaps, the potential for bottom-up innovation remains stifled, which ultimately compromises the long-term viability of green initiatives. In the specific context of Bogor, this lack of deep-rooted integration is reflected in persistent environmental challenges, suggesting that the quality of public service is directly tied to how effectively green principles are internalized by the workforce.

Furthermore, these findings reinforce a common theme in existing literature regarding the disconnect between high-level environmental policies and practical HR execution within the public sector. This is especially prevalent in developing-country contexts, where progress is often hampered by bureaucratic rigidity, centralized regulations, and limited resources. As noted by Louri-Okoumba and Mafini (2021), without formal HR mechanisms in place, GHRM practices risk becoming merely symbolic gestures rather than transformative tools for change.

Nevertheless, there is a clear silver lining in the current digitalization efforts and the organic employee engagement observed in basic green habits. These elements suggest a significant potential for incremental progress. If Bogor can bridge the current gap by introducing structured policies, fostering strong leadership commitment, and asserting institutional authority, these fragmented efforts could be galvanized into a cohesive and effective environmental strategy.

The findings in the Bogor City Government underscore a significant gap between macro-level environmental policy and micro-level HR execution, a phenomenon that aligns with the broader academic discourse on Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) in public sectors. While existing literature, such as the studies by Mamun (2026), highlights that GHRM should ideally foster a "Green Culture" to drive innovation, the reality in Bogor suggests that without formal integration into recruitment and performance metrics, this culture remains superficial. The fragmentation observed confirms the theoretical challenge that public institutions often face: they possess the political will for "Green City" initiatives but struggle to deconstruct rigid, traditional administrative structures to accommodate modern sustainability competencies.

Furthermore, the lack of systematic green training and the absence of environmental indicators in performance appraisals in Bogor reflect a disconnect from the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) framework frequently cited in GHRM research. Previous studies emphasize that green innovation is only achievable when employees are not only capable (through training) but also motivated (through rewards). The Bogor case confirms that when green initiatives are ad hoc and lack a structured reward mechanism, the organizational "green mindset" remains siloed. This supports the argument in recent bibliography that GHRM effectiveness is heavily mediated

by institutionalized mechanisms; without them, pro-environmental behavior remains an act of individual goodwill rather than a sustainable organizational habit.

Finally, the stronger green employee involvement practices in Bogor, such as a paperless office, create a new twist in current literature. Although it has been argued that GHRM has to be a top-down approach, it appears that at a grassroots level, it can thrive even without a green compensation system. Of course, this supports another citation that such an approach is precarious. If Bogor is to advance from a fragmented stage to a mature GHRM system, it has to bridge a gap identified in literature by moving from individual commitments to an institutionalized approach, ensuring that its human capital strategy is as green as its urban planning strategy.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the literature on sustainable HRM through its application of the GHRM framework in local government organizations in the context of a developing country. Practically, the research provides useful implications for policymakers regarding the importance of embedding GHRM in local government organizations through its formal inclusion in recruitment practices, training initiatives, performance measures, and reward systems in order to improve sustainability and service delivery in the public sector. The research is limited in its reliance on a single-case study and qualitative data. Further research could be undertaken using a comparative research design to validate and expand the current research in the public sector context.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that although the Bogor City Government has demonstrated commitment to environmental sustainability at the policy level, the implementation of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) within local government organizations remains limited, fragmented, and largely informal. GHRM practices are currently in a transitional phase, characterized by implicit initiatives rather than institutionalized systems. The absence of structured green recruitment and selection criteria, integrated training programs, environmental performance indicators, and formal reward mechanisms constrains the development of a green-oriented public workforce and limits the potential impact of sustainability initiatives on public service quality.

The findings highlight the critical importance of aligning macro-level environmental policies with micro-level human resource management practices. Strengthening GHRM in local government requires strong leadership commitment, the development of internal regulations and policy frameworks, and sustained investment in capacity building to enhance civil servants' environmental competencies. Institutionalizing GHRM can enable local governments to move beyond symbolic compliance toward more effective and sustainable green governance. This study contributes practical insights for policymakers and practitioners seeking to advance sustainability through human resource management in the public sector. Future research is encouraged to conduct comparative studies across multiple local governments, examine the long-term effects of GHRM on public sector performance, and explore mixed-method approaches to assess the scalability and effectiveness of GHRM initiatives in developing-country contexts.

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