



Tracing the Green Path: A Bibliometric Review of GHRM Practices and Their Impact on Employee Performance

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ABSTRACT

Purpose-this study addresses the growing importance of environmental sustainability in organizational strategies by exploring green human resource management (GHRM) as a key driver in promoting ecologically responsible behaviour and performance among employees.

Aim(s)-the primary aim is to conduct a bibliometric analysis of existing literature on GHRM to understand its intellectual structure, thematic focus, and impact on employee performance over time.

Design/methodology/approach-the study utilizes 238 peer-reviewed, open-access journal articles published between 1989 and 2025 in the web of science database. VosViewer software was employed to analyse keyword co-occurrence, thematic clusters, and bibliographic coupling, providing a visual and quantitative understanding of GHRM research trends.

Findings-five major research clusters emerged: behavioural, policy-driven, technological, psychological, and socio-economic dimensions of GHRM. Although academic interest in GHRM is growing, empirical studies that directly correlate GHRM practices with employee performance remain limited.

Limitation(s) of the study-the study is confined to open-access articles from the web of science database, potentially excluding relevant research from other indexes or non-English sources.

Originality/value-this research contributes a comprehensive, data-driven overview of GHRM scholarship, identifying research gaps and offering direction for future studies that can bridge theory with practical outcomes in employee performance.

KEY WORDS

Green Human Resource Management, Employee Performance, Bibliometric Analysis, Thematic Analysis, Sustainability, Employee Involvement, Employee Engagement

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1 INTRODUCTION

As global industries continue to face mounting environmental pressures, sustainability has emerged as a critical area of concern for organizations. With the Earth's ecosystems under increasing strain from industrial activities, the corporate sector is being called upon to contribute meaningfully to environmental protection and sustainability (Renwick et al., 2013). In this context, Human Resource Management (HRM) has transcended its traditional administrative functions and evolved into a strategic force capable of shaping environmental outcomes through its influence on employee behaviour and organizational culture (Al-Swidi et al., 2021).

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has gained prominence as a framework that embeds ecological consciousness into core HR functions, such as recruitment, training, performance management, and employee engagement (Abbas & Saugan, 2019). These green practices are not only aimed at reducing the environmental footprint of organizations but also at fostering a workforce that is motivated, responsible, and aligned with sustainable development goals (Abbas & Saugan, 2019; Daily & Huang, 2001).

The growing body of research on GHRM suggests that environmentally sustainable HR practices can significantly influence employee performance by promoting innovation, job satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviours (Jabbour & Santos, 2008; Renwick et al., 2016). However, regardless of increasing academic interest, the field remains fragmented, with limited systematic analysis of trends, practices, and performance outcomes.

This study seeks to trace the evolution and impact of GHRM through a bibliometric lens. By analysing published literature, it aims to map key themes, influential works, and emerging research patterns in GHRM. The primary objective is to identify how green HR practices have been conceptualized and implemented, and how its impact is measured on employee performance (Chowdhury et al., 2023). Despite the growing body of literature, existing research on GHRM remains fragmented and underdeveloped in several areas. While studies have explored the conceptual foundations and organizational benefits of GHRM, there is a lack of systematic, large-scale analysis that traces its intellectual structure, thematic trends, and empirical linkages with employee performance. Specifically, few studies have directly examined how green HR practices translate into measurable performance outcomes at the individual and organizational levels (Paranagama, 2019; Pinzone et al., 2016).

Against this backdrop, the present study undertakes a bibliometric analysis of GHRM literature to map its evolution, intellectual structure, and thematic clusters. The study seeks to uncover dominant research streams, highlight underexplored areas, and evaluate the extent to which GHRM has been empirically linked to employee performance. In doing so, it contributes to bridging the gap between conceptual discourse and practical evidence, offering scholars and practitioners a clearer understanding of how GHRM can serve as a strategic lever for both sustainability and human capital development.

2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sustainability has been defined as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Consoli et al., 2016; Jabbour & Santos, 2008). Within organizations, sustainability requires the integration of environmental, social, and economic considerations into business strategy and daily operations. In this context, GHRM refers to the alignment of HR practices with environmental goals to promote eco-friendly behaviour, reduce the ecological footprint, and foster a culture of sustainability (Jackson et al., 2011; Renwick et al., 2013). GHRM encompasses initiatives such as green recruitment, training, performance appraisal, and reward systems that encourage pro-environmental employee actions. Employee performance, in this framework, extends beyond traditional productivity measures to include contributions toward environmental and social objectives (Samola, 2022; Shafaei et al., 2020).

Existing scholarship demonstrates that GHRM can influence multiple dimensions of employee outcomes, such as motivation, innovation, and organizational citizenship behaviours (Daily & Huang, 2001; Jabbour & Santos, 2008). However, most studies remain descriptive and fragmented, often addressing individual practices rather than adopting an integrated perspective. Like, green recruitment and selection attract employees aligned with sustainability values, the long-term retention and performance implications remain underexplored (Pham & Paillé, 2019). Similarly, green training programs have been shown to enhance awareness and eco-innovation, yet their integration into broader career development systems is rarely examined (Asim et al., 2023; Jabbour & Santos, 2008).

Table 1 provides a thematic categorization of GHRM practices documented in prior research, covering areas such as recruitment, training, performance management, rewards, employee engagement, organizational culture, innovation, policy alignment, and cross-cultural perspectives.

Table 1. Thematic Review of GHRM Practices

Sr. No.	GHRM Practices	Subtopics	Author/s & Year	Theme of the Research	Key Findings
1	Recruitment and Selection	Green recruitment, environmental criteria in hiring	(Pham & Paillé, 2019; Renwick et al., 2013)	Attracting candidates aligned with sustainability values	Green recruitment signals environmental commitment, attracting eco-conscious talent, but

					long-term retention impact is under-researched.
2	Training and Development	Green training programs, eco-leadership development	(Asim et al., 2023; Daily & Huang, 2001; Jabbour & Santos, 2008)	Building employee skills for environmental sustainability	Green training enhances environmental awareness and innovation; effectiveness depends on integration into career development plans.
3	Performance Management	Green KPIs, sustainability-linked appraisals	(Mahmood & Nasir, 2023; Moraes et al., 2019)	Evaluating environmental contributions in performance systems	Linking KPIs to environmental goals encourages sustainable behavior; need for standardized metrics.
4	Compensation and Rewards	Green bonuses, recognition programs	(Odhiambo et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2024)	Incentivizing eco-friendly employee behavior	Financial and non-financial rewards drive participation in sustainability, but may need continuous reinforcement.
5	Employee Involvement and Engagement	Idea sharing, CSR participation	(Benn et al., 2015; Shafaei et al., 2020)	Fostering green organizational citizenship behavior	Active engagement in sustainability increases ownership and innovation in environmental initiatives.
6	Green Culture and Organizational Climate	Shared environmental values, sustainability norms	(Abbas & Saugan, 2019; Al-Swidi et al., 2021)	Embedding sustainability in organizational culture	Supportive green culture is critical for sustaining GHRM practices.
7	Integration with Innovation and Technology	Green innovation, digital HR tools	(Gbr & Abdullah, 2025; Mittal & Kaur, 2023)	Leveraging technology for sustainability outcomes	Digital tools and innovation-driven HR policies improve green performance and adaptability.
8	Policy Alignment and Stakeholder Engagement	Compliance with environmental policies, sustainability reporting	(Nisar et al., 2021; Sachdeva et al., 2024)	Aligning HR with governance and stakeholder expectations	External policy pressures accelerate GHRM adoption; transparency enhances credibility.
9	Cross-Cultural and Sectoral Differences	Cultural adaptation, industry-specific approaches	(Palupiningtyas, 2024)	Contextual variations in GHRM practices	Cultural and industrial contexts shape GHRM implementation and effectiveness.

Source: Authors own analysis

It highlights the breadth of GHRM practices, a critical review of the literature reveals several gaps. First, performance management systems with green key performance indicators (KPIs) are widely advocated (Mittal & Kaur, 2023), but the absence of standardized metrics limits comparability across organizations. Second, reward mechanisms such as green bonuses or recognition schemes encourage participation in environmental initiatives (Aggarwal et al., 2023), yet their long-term motivational effects require further empirical validation. Third, while employee engagement in sustainability fosters ownership and innovation (Shahzad et al., 2023), sustaining such engagement often depends on a supportive organizational culture an aspect that is not consistently addressed in existing studies (Mukherji & Bhatnagar, 2022).

Moreover, although some research emphasizes the role of digital transformation and technological innovation in strengthening GHRM outcomes (Chatterjee et al., 2022; Mittal & Kaur, 2023), these discussions remain peripheral rather than central to HRM debates. Cross-cultural studies (Palupiningtyas, 2024) point to contextual variations in GHRM implementation, yet comparative evidence across industries and regions is scarce. Finally, while there is consensus that GHRM contributes positively to employee performance, the direct causal links remain underexplored, and most findings are derived from conceptual or cross-sectional studies.

Overall, the literature indicates that GHRM holds significant potential as a strategic tool for achieving both sustainability and human capital development. However, the lack of longitudinal, empirical, and standardized studies underscores the need for comprehensive research that critically examines how GHRM practices translate into measurable employee performance outcomes across diverse contexts.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a bibliometric analysis to explore the intersection of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices and employee performance within academic literature (Callon et al., 1983). Data were retrieved from the Web of Science database (See Table 2.), covering the publication period from 1989 to 2025. The search utilized the keywords “*Green Human Resource Management*,” OR “*GHRM*,” and “*Employee Performance*.” To conduct the bibliometric analysis, two techniques were applied, **co-occurrence analysis** using author keywords and **bibliometric coupling** with countries as the unit of analysis. These methods were employed to identify thematic clusters, research patterns, and collaborative networks within the GHRM literature.

The combination of co-occurrence analysis and bibliometric coupling was deliberately chosen to provide a holistic understanding of the research domain. While co-occurrence analysis captures the conceptual and thematic focus of GHRM studies, bibliometric coupling highlights structural and collaborative dimensions at a country level. Together, these methods ensure that the study not only identifies what is being researched but also where and by whom, offering a comprehensive picture of the field

Table 2. Article Selection Criteria and Dataset Reduction Process

Step	Selection Criteria	Number of Articles Remaining	Description
1	Initial search using keywords: <i>GHRM</i> and <i>Employee Performance</i>	4,272	Articles retrieved from Web of Science (1989–2025) using keyword search
2	Open access articles only	2,036	Filtered to include only openly accessible articles
3	Document type: Journal articles only	1,815	Excluded conference papers, reviews, book chapters, etc.
4	Research areas: Business Economics, Social Sciences, Operations Research and Management, Arts and Humanities, Public Administration	238	Final selection based on relevant disciplines

Source: Authors own analysis

Table 2 outlines the step-by-step process used to refine the dataset for this bibliometric analysis. The initial search of the Web of Science database, using the keywords “*Green Human Resource Management*,” “*GHRM*,” and “*Employee Performance*,” resulted in 4,272 articles. To ensure accessibility and replicability, only open access articles were retained, reducing the count to 2,036. Next, to maintain the academic rigor of the dataset, the document type was filtered to include only peer-reviewed journal articles, which narrowed the dataset further to 1,815 articles. Finally, to focus the analysis on disciplines most relevant to the research objectives, articles were limited to specific research areas: Business Economics, Social Sciences, Operations Research and Management, Arts and Humanities, and Public Administration. This final filtering step resulted in a refined dataset of 238 articles, which served as the basis for the bibliometric analysis. Two bibliometric techniques, bibliographic coupling and keywords’ co-occurrence were used for the analysis.

4 RESULTS

The keyword co-occurrence network depicted in Figure 01 offers an expanded and nuanced visualization of the academic landscape surrounding Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) and its relationship with environmental performance. (Palupiningtyas, 2024; Samola, 2022) Derived from the

final dataset of 238 articles, this bibliometric map reveals multiple interconnected thematic clusters, each representing distinct but overlapping areas of scholarly inquiry. At the core of the network, the dominant terms “Green Human Resource Management,” “Environmental Performance,” and “Sustainability”, are prominently positioned, indicating their centrality and frequency within the literature. The thick linkages between these nodes suggest a strong scholarly focus on how GHRM practices contribute to achieving sustainable environmental outcomes within organizations (Jackson et al., 2011).

4.1.1 MAPPING OF GHRM AND CO-OCCURRENCE WITH AUTHORS KEYWORDS

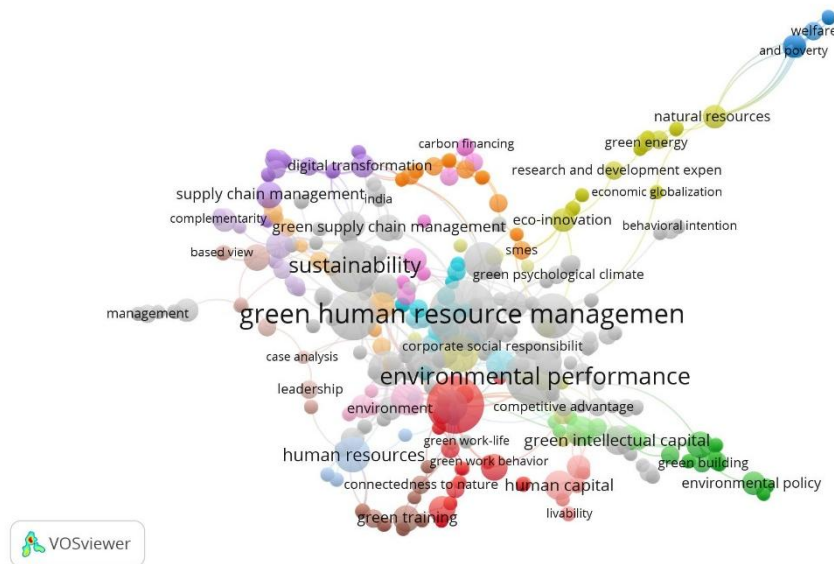


Fig 1. Mapping of GHRM and Co-occurrence with authors Keywords

Source: VosViewer 1.6.20

Several significant clusters emerge around the central themes, highlighting the multidimensional nature of GHRM research: The **red cluster** (bottom center) emphasizes behavioural and psychological aspects of green HR practices. Keywords such as “green training,” “green work behaviour,” “green work-life,” and “connectedness to nature” reflect growing attention to how employees’ attitudes, motivation, and environmental awareness shape organizational performance. (Asim et al., 2023) The presence of terms like “human capital” and “green intellectual capital” further underscores the strategic importance of employee capabilities in driving sustainability. The **green cluster** (bottom right) includes keywords such as “environmental policy,” “green building,” and “green intellectual capital,” suggesting an alignment between HR practices and broader policy frameworks and infrastructure planning. (Mahmood & Nasir, 2023) (Nisar et al., 2021) (Sachdeva et al., 2024) (Aggarwal et al., 2023) This points to the growing recognition of GHRM as a bridge between corporate governance and national environmental strategies. The **purple cluster** (top left) is anchored around “supply chain management,” “green supply chain management,” and “digital transformation,” indicating a key area where operational sustainability intersects with HR strategy. (Labaran & Masood, 2023) (Mishra, 2017) (Elavarasan et al., 2021) The **yellow cluster** (top right) is driven by concepts such as “eco-innovation,” “green energy,” “natural resources,” and “research and development expenditure.” This suggests a technological and macroeconomic orientation in GHRM research, where green HR practices are linked to innovation capabilities, national resources, and economic globalization. The **blue cluster**, although small, introduces the social dimension with keywords like “welfare” and “poverty.” This implies an emerging linkage between GHRM and socioeconomic well-being, possibly reflecting newer sustainability models that integrate environmental goals with human development objectives.

This network visualization underscores the interdisciplinary and evolving nature of GHRM research. While the central focus remains on how HR practices can drive environmental performance, the expanding clusters reflect broader concerns related to innovation, policy, employee psychology, supply chain integration, and socioeconomic outcomes. (Sajuyigbe et al., 2024) (Mukherji & Bhatnagar, 2022)

4.1.2 MAPPING OF GHRM AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE CO-OCCURRENCE WITH AUTHORS KEYWORDS

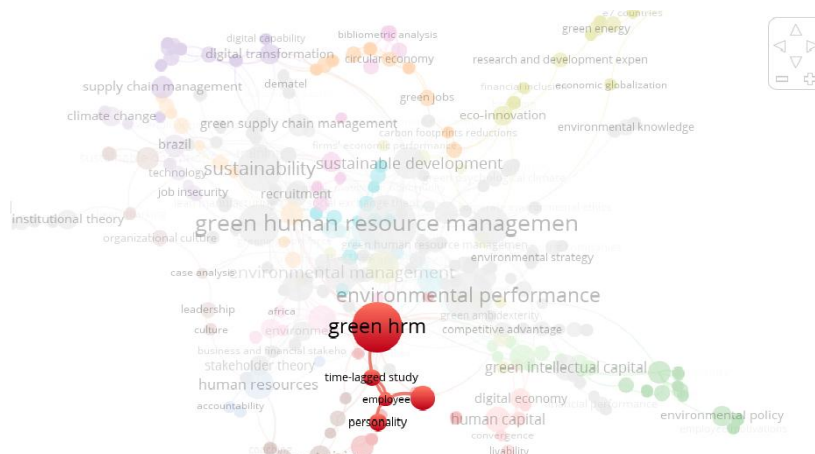


Fig 2. Mapping of GHRM and Employee performance Co-occurrence with authors Keywords

Source: VosViewer 1.6.20

The keyword co-occurrence analysis presented in **Figure 2** reveals that Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) is not only a managerial strategy for environmental improvement but also a behaviourally grounded, theoretically informed, and strategically oriented domain. The emergence of thematic clusters focused on employee behaviour, policy integration, innovation, **and** stakeholder engagement (Asim et al., 2023) reflects a robust and expanding body of research. (Shahzad et al., 2023) Notably, there is a growing shift toward individual-level analysis, such as the exploration of personality traits **and** employee behaviour, alongside organizational and macro-level constructs. This demonstrates that GHRM is increasingly being examined as a multi-level phenomenon, integrating perspectives from psychology, strategy, operations, and policy within the broader framework of sustainability. (Bhalla & Mehta, 2016)

However, the analysis also reveals a significant gap in the existing literature: while several studies investigate how personality traits and employee behaviour are influenced by the adoption of GHRM practices, there is limited research examining the direct impact of GHRM practices on employee performance. This indicates an underexplored area that warrants further empirical investigation to understand how green HR initiatives translate into measurable performance outcomes at the employee level.

4.1.3 BIBLIOMETRIC COUPLING WITH COUNTRY, WITH A MINIMUM ONE DOCUMENT AND CITATION PER COUNTRY

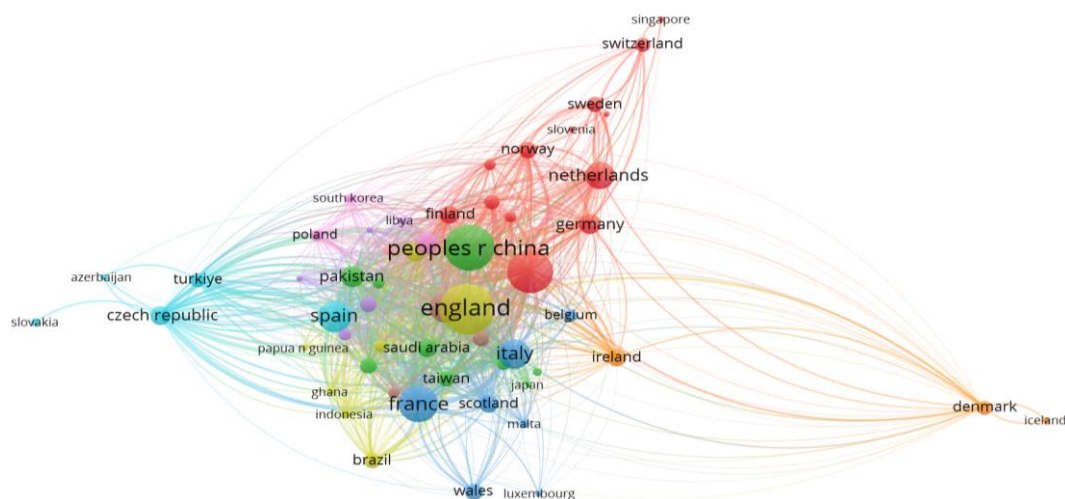


Fig 3. Bibliometric coupling with country, with a minimum one document and citation per country

Source: VosViewer 1.6.20

The co-authorship analysis in Figure 03 reveals a globally distributed yet regionally clustered research landscape. China and England lead in terms of both research output and collaboration intensity, often serving as hubs for international partnerships. European countries show a dense collaborative network, while emerging economies such as India, Pakistan, Brazil, and Saudi Arabia are increasingly participating in global research efforts (See table 3).

Table 3. Country-wise Research Contributions in GHRM

Sr. No.	Country	Documents	Citations	Total Link Strength
1	England	65	3904	36025
2	People's R China	53	2584	28971
3	France	34	3798	26208
4	USA	45	2783	21951
5	Australia	23	1519	17950
6	Spain	23	2280	17324
7	Malaysia	12	669	12201
8	Italy	22	1936	10352
9	Pakistan	12	809	9120
10	Czech Republic	9	487	7532
15	India	10	714	6510

Source: VosViewer 1.6.20

Table 3 highlights the top contributing countries in the research domain of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) and employee performance. England leads in terms of publications, citations, and collaboration strength, indicating its central role in global GHRM research. China, France, and the USA also show strong academic outputs and international linkages. Emerging contributors like Malaysia, Pakistan, and India have lower publication counts but demonstrate growing research engagement through moderate link strengths. Overall, the table reflects a balanced contribution from both developed and developing nations, with increasing global collaboration in GHRM research.

5 DISCUSSION

The findings of this bibliometric analysis highlight the rapid expansion of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) as an interdisciplinary research domain. The emergence of distinct clusters—covering behavioural, policy-driven, technological, psychological, and socio-economic perspectives—confirms the multifaceted nature of GHRM (Renwick et al., 2013; Mukherji & Bhatnagar, 2022). A notable insight is the growing emphasis on behavioural and psychological dimensions, suggesting that employee attitudes, pro-environmental behaviours, and organizational citizenship behaviours are critical mediators linking GHRM practices to performance outcomes (Asim et al., 2023; Shahzad et al., 2023).

At the same time, the technological and policy-driven clusters demonstrate that GHRM is increasingly being positioned within broader sustainability and governance frameworks (Nisar et al., 2021; Sachdeva et al., 2024). The bibliometric coupling analysis also reveals strong academic contributions from developed economies such as England, China, and the USA, whereas emerging economies like India and Pakistan remain underrepresented. This geographical imbalance restricts the generalizability of findings and highlights the need for context-specific studies (Palupiningtyas, 2024).

Despite the upward trajectory of GHRM research, the study identifies significant gaps. First, while conceptual and narrative reviews dominate, empirical studies directly linking GHRM practices to measurable employee performance outcomes are limited (Samola, 2022). Second, standardized tools for assessing green performance remain absent, which hampers cross-organizational comparison (Dubey & Verma, 2018). Third, although integration of digital tools and innovation-driven HR strategies is gaining scholarly attention, their application in practice remains fragmented (Chatterjee et al., 2022; Mittal & Kaur, 2023).

6 CONCLUSION

This study provides a comprehensive bibliometric overview of GHRM literature published between 1989 and 2025. By analysing 238 peer-reviewed articles, it maps the intellectual structure and thematic evolution of GHRM, with particular focus on its implications for employee performance. The findings reveal that while GHRM is widely recognized as a strategic enabler of sustainability, empirical research connecting HR practices with concrete performance outcomes remains scarce. The study contributes to advancing the understanding of GHRM as both an environmental imperative and a strategic HRM practice, while also offering directions for scholars and practitioners to bridge theory with practice.

6.1 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The results carry several important implications for managers and policymakers. First, organizations should embed environmental objectives within HR practices such as recruitment, training, and performance appraisal, thereby fostering a culture of sustainability (Daily & Huang, 2001; Jabbour & Santos, 2008). Second, integrating green KPIs into performance management systems can help align employee outcomes with organizational sustainability goals (Dubey & Verma, 2018). Third, digital transformation tools such as AI-enabled HR systems offer opportunities to monitor, evaluate, and reward green behaviours more effectively (Chatterjee et al., 2022).

For policymakers, the findings emphasize the importance of supportive regulatory frameworks that encourage organizations to adopt GHRM practices, while also incentivizing eco-innovation and sustainable workforce development. Cross-country collaborations may further accelerate the integration of GHRM into both developed and emerging economies.

6.2 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study is limited in scope as it draws exclusively from open-access journal articles indexed in the Web of Science, potentially missing relevant work from other databases and non-open-access sources. Only English-language, peer-reviewed journal articles were included, which may have excluded diverse global perspectives. Additionally, while the study maps key themes in GHRM, it does not empirically test the link between green HR practices and employee performance. The use of a single tool, VosViewer, for analysis may also have limited the depth and diversity of bibliometric insights.

6.3 FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research on Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) should prioritize empirical studies that directly assess the impact of specific green HR practices—such as training, performance appraisal, and employee engagement—on measurable employee performance outcomes. (Mittal & Kaur, 2023) (Sil, 2022) Comparative studies across cultures and industries can reveal contextual factors influencing the effectiveness of GHRM. Additionally, integrating digital tools and HR analytics into green practices presents a promising area for exploration. (Sidique & Pereira, 2023) (Adnan, 2021) Longitudinal and mixed-methods research would offer deeper insights into the long-term effects and behavioural dynamics of GHRM. Finally, expanding the scope of GHRM to assess its contribution to broader societal goals, such as social equity and inclusive development, will strengthen its role as a strategic driver of sustainability.

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