

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS): A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) mandated by the United Nations demand a global commitment, including from the corporate sector, to achieve social, economic, and environmental targets by 2030. Human Resource Management (HRM) plays a crucial role as the main agent of change in integrating sustainability principles into organizational operations. This research aims to analyze the strategic role of HRM functions ranging from recruitment, training and development, to performance management and compensation in supporting the achievement of the SDGs, particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). The strategies discussed include the implementation of green skills training programs, equal pay policies, and performance measurement based on social impact. The research findings conclude that the transformation of HRM towards sustainability-focused practices not only enhances corporate image and employee engagement but also directly contributes to the achievement of global sustainable development goals.

Keywords: *Human Resource Management (HRM), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Sustainability, Work Ethics, Organizational Performance.*

A. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable Development is a concept that has become a central global agenda. This concept was first popularized through the Brundtland Report in 1987, which defined it as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In 2015, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a universal blueprint for achieving a better and more sustainable future for all. The SDGs consist of 17 interconnected goals, covering social, economic, and environmental dimensions. In addition, the drastic difference in life expectancy between the rich and the poor, healthcare that is not universally accessible, and the large number of people dying from preventable infectious and chronic diseases are also issues, (Papadavid, 2015). Achieving the SDGs requires the active participation of all stakeholders, including governments, civil society, and most importantly, the private sector. Within the private sector, the role of Human Resource Management (HRM) is highly important. HRM, as the function that manages the most valuable asset in the organization namely people has a unique potential to instill sustainability values into the daily culture and work practices. Currently, companies are no longer only measured based on financial profit alone, but also based on social impact (People) and environmental impact (Planet), a concept known as the Triple Bottom Line. To achieve this balance, a reorientation of the HRM function is necessary. HRM must transform from a traditional administrative role into a strategic partner that actively drives sustainability initiatives.

The main challenges for HRM in the context of the SDGs include:

- Strategic Integration: Difficulty in integrating SDG principles into existing HRM policies (for example, recruitment that focuses on sustainability, training for "green skills").

- Impact Measurement: Complexity in developing performance metrics that can accurately measure employee and organizational contributions towards SDG targets.
- Work Culture: Obstacles in forming an organizational culture that is ethical, inclusive, and environmentally oriented across all hierarchical levels.

Overcoming these challenges and leveraging HRM opportunities for the SDGs can be achieved through strategies focused on:

- Inclusive Recruitment and Selection: Supporting SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 8 (Decent Work) through fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory recruitment practices.
- Sustainable Training and Development: Supporting SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 13 (Climate Action) by providing training on work ethics, health, safety, and the skills needed for the green economy.
- Performance and Compensation Management: Aligning employee bonuses and incentives with sustainability targets and corporate social responsibility.

Based on this background, the focus of discussion in this article is:

- What is the strategic role of HRM in supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?
- How can HRM functions (recruitment, training, performance) be integrated with sustainability values?
- What are the challenges and opportunities for implementing SDGs-oriented HRM in the context of modern organizations?

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Human Resource Management (HRM)

Human Resource Management (HRM) is defined as the organizational function responsible for attracting, developing, motivating, and retaining competent and goal-oriented employees. The main goal of HRM is to maximize employee productivity while protecting their welfare. According to Bintoro and Daryanto (2017), HRM is a science that regulates the relationship and role of the resources (workers) owned by individuals effectively and efficiently, and utilized maximally so as to have a positive impact on achieving the goals of the company, employees, and society. According to Ajabar (2020), human resource management is an activity to trigger, improve, motivate, and maintain employee performance optimally within the company. According to Mangkunegara (2017), human resource management is the planning, organizing, coordinating, implementing, and supervising of the procurement, development, compensation, integration, maintenance, and separation of labor in order to achieve company goals.

The definition of human resource management from each expert above varies. Thus, from the above opinions, it can be concluded that human resource management is an activity that includes the processes of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling used as human power or capability utilized to achieve company goals. Companies must be able to manage human resource management maximally so that the performance and goals that have been designed can run properly and according to expectations. Because of the importance of the role of human resources in the implementation and achievement of organizational goals, human resource management must pay attention to several aspects such as staffing, training and development, motivation, and maintenance, which are detailed by De Cenzo and Robbins (1996: 8), stating that: Human resources management is the part of the organization that is concerned with the “people” or human resources aspect of management position, including recruiting, screening, training, rewarding, and appraising.

According to Hasibuan (2007:21), the functions of management are briefly explained as follows:

- Planning (Planning): Planning labor effectively and efficiently to suit company needs in realizing goals.
- Organizing (Organizing): Establishing an organization by designing the structure and relationships between the tasks that must be performed by the prepared workforce.
- Directing (Directing): Activities to direct all employees to cooperate and work effectively and efficiently in helping to achieve the goals of the company, employees, and society.
- Controlling (Controlling): Activities to control all employees to comply with company regulations and work according to plan.
- Labor Procurement (Procurement): The process of recruiting, selecting, placement, orientation, and induction to get employees who fit the company's needs.
- Development (Development): The process of improving the technical, theoretical, conceptual, and moral skills of employees through education and training.

- Compensation: Direct and indirect rewards, money or goods given to employees as compensation for services rendered to the company.
- Integration (Integration): Activities to unite the interests of the company and the needs of employees, so as to create harmonious and mutually beneficial cooperation.
- Maintenance (Maintenance): Activities to maintain or improve the physical, mental condition, and loyalty of employees so that they are willing to work together until retirement. Good maintenance is carried out with welfare programs based largely on the needs of the employees.
- Discipline (Discipline): The willingness and awareness to comply with company regulations and social norms.
- Termination of Employment (Separation): The termination of someone's employment relationship with a company. This termination can be caused by the employee's wishes, the company's wishes, the end of the work contract, retirement, and other causes.

From these functions, the main elements of HRM relevant to sustainability include:

- Recruitment and Selection: The process of identifying and attracting the best candidates, with a new focus on aligning candidate values with the company's sustainability ethics.
- Training and Development: Increasing employee knowledge, skills, and abilities. In the context of the SDGs, this includes ethics training, environmental awareness, and technical skills for sustainable industries.
- Performance Management: The process of ensuring that employee activities align with organizational goals. Performance must begin to include sustainability metrics (for example, personal carbon footprint reduction).
- Compensation and Rewards: Fair pay and benefits. This is directly related to SDG 8 (Decent Work) and the implementation of equal pay between genders (SDG 5).

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a series of 17 global goals set by the UN in 2015. These goals are universal, binding all countries to act in collaborative partnership. The three main pillars of the SDGs are economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. The SDGs continuously encourage savings and resource enhancement by gradually changing the way technology is developed and used. All state parties must meet the basic needs of work, food, energy, water, and sanitation.

The goals of sustainable development are:

- Stable economic growth
- Poverty reduction
- Conservation of natural resources
- Social advancement and equality
- Reducing global inequalities, especially gender inequality. Through inclusive education and decent work, we support generations with development opportunities.
- Promoting innovative and resilient infrastructure by creating communities and cities with sustainable production and consumption.
- Environmental protection
- Protecting various ecosystems from land, sea, air, and others. Environmentally-conscious economic growth is another name for the SDGs concept. The goal is to achieve harmony between ecological sustainability, economic sustainability, and social-political sustainability. Sustainable development always strives to preserve and enhance our resources by gradually changing the way our technology is developed and used. All state parties must meet the basic needs of work, food, energy, water, and sanitation. Everyone is entitled to a healthy, safe, and clean environment. This can easily be achieved by reducing pollution, poverty, and unemployment (Stephen, Rees, Mikheenko, & Macaskie, 2019).

In the context of HRM itself, the main focus is on the following goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education: Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education, and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.
HRM Relevance: Sustainable training and development programs, partnerships with educational institutions.
- SDG 5: Gender Equality: Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.
HRM Relevance: Equal pay policies, promotion of women to leadership positions, and supportive leave policies.

- **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth:** Promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.
HRM Relevance: Fair employment practices, safe working conditions, and the elimination of forced labor/child labor.

3. Green HRM

Green HRM is an extension of traditional HRM practices that focuses on environmental outcomes. It involves the use of HRM policies to promote sustainable practices and reduce the organization's environmental impact. Green HRM acts as a bridge between corporate sustainability strategies and the daily behavior of employees, making it key to achieving environmental targets in the SDGs.

C. METHOD

This research uses a descriptive analytical research method. Descriptive analysis is a statistical method used to analyze data by describing or illustrating the collected data as it is, without intending to make generalized conclusions or generalizations. In this context, descriptive research focuses on reviewing literature and conceptual frameworks aimed at describing and analyzing the roles, strategies, and challenges of implementing Human Resource Management (HRM) practices in supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) based on existing theories and organizational best practices. This research aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the phenomenon of HRM and sustainability integration.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Strategic Role of HRM in SDG Integration

HRM has a strategic role as a facilitator and champion in internalizing the SDGs across all layers of the organization. Corporate performance supported by the SDGs not only generates profit but also creates Shared Value for society and the environment.

This role is realized through:

- **Alignment of Core Values:** HRM must ensure that the company's core values reflect a commitment to the SDGs. This begins by aligning the company's Vision and Mission with global targets, such as reducing inequality (SDG 10) or supporting clean energy (SDG 7).
- **Creation of a Sustainability Culture:** A culture that encourages employees to take pro-environmental and social initiatives (e.g., reducing paper usage or engaging in voluntary activities) is the responsibility of HRM through cultural and ethical reinforcement programs.
- **Development of Human Resource Capacity:** HRM is responsible for ensuring employees have the appropriate skills (future skills) to face sustainability challenges.

2. Strategy for Implementing HRM Functions for the SDGs

The integration of SDG values must be reflected in every HRM function:

a. Recruitment and Selection

- **Value-Oriented Candidate Search:** The recruitment process must look for individuals who are not only technically competent but also have a moral commitment to sustainability and work ethics.
- **Inclusive Practices (SDG 5 & 8):** Implementing recruitment that consciously eliminates gender, race, or age bias, and promoting diversity in the workplace.

b. Training and Development

- **Green Skills Programs:** Providing training on energy efficiency, waste management, or circular business practices to support environmental SDGs (e.g., SDG 12, Responsible Consumption and Production).
- **Ethics and Social Compliance Training:** Educating employees about human rights, anti-corruption, and the importance of occupational health and safety, which is the core of Decent Work (SDG 8).

c. Performance Management

- **SDG-Based Performance Metrics:** Individual performance goals must include indicators that contribute to the SDGs. Example: Supply chain managers are evaluated based on waste reduction, or department

managers are evaluated based on increasing the percentage of employees from underrepresented groups (SDG 10).

- 360 Degree Feedback: Including assessments from colleagues and subordinates regarding ethical behavior and social/environmental contributions.

d. Compensation and Employee Relations

- Equal Pay (SDG 5): HRM must transparently audit the salary structure to ensure there are no unfair pay gaps between men and women for work of equal value.
- Welfare Initiatives (SDG 3, Health and Well-being): Providing comprehensive physical and mental health programs, as well as flexible work policies to balance work and personal life.

3. Challenges and Opportunities

Table 1. Challenges and Opportunities implementing Human Resource Management (HRM) Practices in Supporting the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Aspect	Challenges	Opportunities
Integration	Resistance from senior management or shareholders who are only focused on short-term profits.	Creating Shared Value and enhancing corporate reputation (Corporate Social Responsibility/CSR).
Skills	The skills gap between the needs of the 'green' job market and the qualifications of the current workforce.	Becoming the employer of choice for young talent who care about sustainability.
Cost	High initial investment for sustainable training and environmental technology.	Reducing long-term operational costs through resource efficiency (e.g., energy and water efficiency).
Measurement	Difficulty in measuring the qualitative impact of social and environmental programs into quantitative business results.	Increasing employee engagement and workforce retention, which positively correlates with performance.

Overall, HRM must act as the main driver in Organizational Transformation towards a sustainable business model. Without a trained and motivated workforce, global goals like the SDGs will remain aspirations, not reality.

E. CONCLUSION

Human Resource Management (HRM) holds a central and strategic role in supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The paradigm shift from a sole focus on profit to the Triple Bottom Line (Profit, People, Planet) demands HRM to reorient all its functions, from recruitment to compensation, to align with sustainability values. The integration of HRM and SDGs is realized through specific strategies: inclusive recruitment practices (supporting SDG 5 & 8), the development of green skills and ethics training (supporting SDG 4), and performance management that includes social and environmental metrics. Although companies face challenges such as initial investment costs and cultural resistance, the opportunities offered, such as improved reputation, employee engagement, and long-term operational efficiency, are much greater. By placing sustainability at the heart of the HRM strategy, organizations not only contribute to the UN's global agenda but also build a strong foundation for future business growth and resilience.

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