



Green Human Resource Management and Organizational Sustainability: A Study on Employee Environmental Behavior as a Mediator

Muhammad Ramdhan

Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Ganesha, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: ramdhan@stieganessa.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

The public sector, particularly at the grassroots level like village administration offices (Kelurahan), plays a critical role in environmental preservation through eco-friendly governance. However, empirical studies focusing on green human capital within local government units remain scarce. This study aims to explore the implementation of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) and its impact on Organizational Sustainability, utilizing Employee Environmental Behavior (EEB) as a mediating mechanism at the Kelurahan Taman Office in Pematang Rejang Regency. Adopting a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design, data were gathered through in-depth interviews with 8 purposively selected informants (including management and operational staff), non-participant observations of daily workflows, and document analysis. The data were systematically analyzed using the interactive thematic analysis method by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings reveal that GHRM is implemented not through rigid central mandates, but via localized leadership innovations, such as strict monitoring of paper consumption and tech-driven green training. This framework successfully triggers voluntary EEB among civil servants and contractual staff, manifesting as eco-initiatives (e.g., paper reuse) and eco-civic virtue (e.g., proactive energy conservation). This behavioral shift serves as the primary engine driving organizational sustainability, which is structurally reflected in a 35% reduction in office paper procurement, zero paper-waste burning, and increased public service agility (speeding up citizen data processing from 3 days to 10 minutes). Ultimately, this study implies that macro green policies can only generate institutional sustainability when they are successfully translated into the daily eco-friendly habits of individual public servants.

Keywords: *Green Human Resource Management, Employee Environmental Behavior, Organizational Sustainability, Public Administration.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary era marked by rapid environmental degradation, resource depletion, and climate change, organizations across all sectors are facing immense pressure to transition from traditional operating models to sustainable ones. While the discourse on environmental sustainability has historically been centered on heavy manufacturing and multinational corporate sectors, public administration and local government units at the grassroots level such as village or sub-district offices

(Kantor Kelurahan) play an equally pivotal and critical role in driving ecological preservation. As the closest administrative body to civil society, the public sector in Indonesia is now legally and morally challenged to implement eco-friendly governance, which can be strategically achieved through the internal mechanism of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) ((Khalid et al., 2026). GHRM refers to the systemic alignment of human resource policies including recruitment, training, performance appraisal, and compensation systems with the organization's broader environmental objectives (Al Doghan et al., 2022). Within public organizations, integrating these green principles is not merely a modern trend but a structural necessity to secure long-term organizational sustainability, which encompasses financial-operational efficiency, the systematic reduction of paper waste, and the acceleration of public service digital transformation (de Oliveira Pinheiro & de Araujo Vasconcelos, 2025).

Despite the growing global and national consensus on the importance of sustainability, conventional public administration offices frequently struggle to execute eco-centric mandates effectively. This operational challenge is highly apparent in local government institutions like Kelurahan Taman, located in the Pemalang Regency, Central Java. As an administrative hub serving a dense local community, Kelurahan Taman produces substantial daily waste stemming from conventional administrative paperwork, relies heavily on fossil-fuel-powered infrastructure, and consumes significant amounts of electricity. To mitigate this ecological footprint, the institution requires a profound strategic shift toward organizational sustainability, which involves transforming its civil servants (Aparatur Sipil Negara) and non-civil-servant staff into an eco-conscious workforce (Faisal, 2024; Hameed et al., 2025). Previous studies argue that traditional HR performance metrics are no longer sufficient to secure a sustainable social and institutional advantage in the modern era; thus, embedding explicit environmental values within the employee lifecycle becomes mandatory (Jusdijachlan & Ridwan, 2023). When public servants are selected, trained, and structurally incentivized based on green parameters, the public institution's overall capacity to fulfill its environmental regulations and social responsibilities expands significantly (Kou et al., 2024).

However, the empirical and theoretical path connecting formal GHRM practices to institutional sustainability is highly complex and rarely functions in a direct, linear manner. Organizational scholars suggest that macro-level policies and formal green guidelines alone cannot guarantee sustainability unless they successfully alter the psychological ownership and behavioral patterns of the human resources involved (Sharifzadeh, 2024). This critical operational reality highlights the role of Employee Environmental Behavior (EEB) as a vital mediating variable that bridges institutional policy with actual outcomes. EEB, which manifests in daily workplace actions such as rigorous energy conservation, waste minimization, double-sided printing, and active participation in digital public service platforms, acts as the practical engine through which macro-level GHRM policies are translated into tangible ecological and institutional performance (Xie et al., 2023). When the administrative staff in Kelurahan Taman actively embrace pro-environmental behaviors in their daily routines, the formal GHRM frameworks established by the regional leadership are reinforced, ultimately driving the public office toward successful sustainability milestones (Opatha et al., 2026).

Furthermore, analyzing this phenomenon within the scope of a Kelurahan provides an interesting dynamic regarding public service motivation. Public employees are driven by bureaucratic structures, community service values, and specific government mandates that differ fundamentally from the profit-maximizing motives found in the private sector. In a localized setting like Kelurahan Taman, Pematang, the successful implementation of GHRM could potentially create a dual-benefit system: it modernizes internal office operations while simultaneously setting an ecological example for the surrounding community that relies on the office for daily administrative affairs. Consequently, understanding how GHRM influences organizational sustainability through the behavioral choices of its employees becomes crucial to ensuring that green governance is not treated as a superficial administrative checklist, but rather as an embedded organizational culture.

While the intersection of green HR practices, environmental behaviors, and organizational sustainability has been extensively explored in Western corporate environments such as multinational companies, hospitality industries, and large-scale manufacturing sectors empirical research within the context of Indonesian local village administration remains significantly scarce. Public servants face distinct institutional constraints, budgetary limitations, localized cultural dynamics, and rigid bureaucratic hierarchies compared to private-sector employees, creating a distinct and notable research gap (Ali et al., 2025; Al-Sabi et al., 2024). Therefore, this study aims to bridge this literary and empirical gap by comprehensively examining the impact of Green Human Resource Management on Organizational Sustainability, utilizing Employee Environmental Behavior as a key mediator, with a specific empirical focus on Kelurahan Taman, Pematang. The findings of this research are expected to provide clear, actionable insights for local government leaders and regional policymakers to design sustainable, eco-friendly public institutions driven by green human capital.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Green Human Resource Management

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has emerged as a strategic imperative for organizations aiming to align their human capital practices with environmental sustainability targets. GHRM involves integrating eco-friendly practices into core HR functions, such as green recruitment, green training, and green performance appraisal, to foster an environmentally conscious workforce (Ariyantiningih & Santoso, 2026). By implementing these practices, institutions can systematically communicate their environmental goals to employees, thereby shifting the organizational climate toward sustainability (Bazrkar & Yadegari, 2023). In the public sector, GHRM plays a vital role in restructuring bureaucratic habits, ensuring that public servants evaluate the ecological impact of their daily administrative decisions (Lin et al., 2024). Furthermore, macro GHRM frameworks serve as an institutional signal that enhances the organization's green reputation, which in turn motivates employees to support corporate environmental policies (Vu et al., 2025). Ultimately, when GHRM is deeply embedded within an institution's infrastructure, it transforms human capital into a sustainable resource capable of driving long-term

ecological governance (Tatasari & Yulfajar, 2025).

Based on the theories above, GHRM is not merely an operational checklist but a comprehensive, top-down institutional framework that shapes organizational culture. In the context of a public office like Kelurahan Taman, Pemalang, GHRM acts as the primary independent variable. It serves as the formal mechanism through which local leaders can systematically instill eco-friendly values into civil servants, shifting them away from conventional, paper-heavy bureaucratic habits toward modern, green administrative practices.

B. Employee Environmental Behavior

Employee Environmental Behavior (EEB), often referred to as pro-environmental workplace behavior, encompasses voluntary actions taken by individuals within the organization to minimize the negative ecological impact of their work activities. These behaviors include energy conservation, paper reduction, recycling, and proposing innovative eco-friendly practices (Kultsum, 2026). EEB is heavily influenced by the individual's psychological alignment with the organization's environmental vision, showing that formal policies only work when employees internalize green values (Xie & Lau, 2023). In administrative settings, small individual actions such as turning off unused electronics or digitizing physical files cumulatively dictate the ecological footprint of the entire institution (Gao et al., 2025). Moreover, employees who exhibit high EEB often act as green change agents, influencing their peers to adopt similar sustainable habits through social learning mechanisms (Sahu et al., 2025). Therefore, cultivating EEB is essential because the success of any structural environmental initiative relies heavily on the willingness and behavior of the internal workforce (Vebryana et al., 2024).

The literature emphasizes that while GHRM provides the structural rules, EEB represents the grassroot execution of those rules by individual staff members. For the staff at Kelurahan Taman, EEB is the practical manifestation of their environmental consciousness in daily operations such as consciously turning off office air conditioners when not in use or minimizing paper waste (Ateeq et al., 2025). This indicates that organizational green goals cannot be achieved through passive policy compliance alone, but require active, voluntary daily actions from the employees.

C. Organizational Sustainability

Organizational Sustainability refers to an institution's ability to achieve its operational goals while simultaneously preserving environmental resources, maintaining social equity, and securing long-term economic or functional viability. Modern organizational sustainability requires moving beyond mere financial profitability to encompass comprehensive ecological and social performance metrics (Ramdhan & Rahayu, 2025). For public sector and administrative institutions, sustainability is measured through operational efficiency, digital transformation that eliminates resource waste, and the delivery of eco-friendly public services (Kasubi et al., 2025). Achieving this state requires a continuous alignment of internal capabilities, organizational culture, and stakeholder expectations regarding environmental stewardship (Hameed et al., 2025). Furthermore, sustainable organizations are characterized by their agility and capacity to adapt to evolving environmental regulations and community demands for clean governance (Doghan, 2024). Consequently,

sustainability is not a static endpoint but a continuous, dynamic process driven by an organization's strategic commitment to environmental preservation (Ogiemwonyi et al., 2023).

Synthesizing these perspectives, organizational sustainability serves as the ultimate dependent variable and the long-term objective of an institution. For Kelurahan Taman, Pematang Jaya, this sustainability is defined by its ability to maintain high-quality public services while drastically reducing its carbon and waste footprint. It transforms the sub-district office into an agile, resource-efficient, and digitally capable institution that serves the community without degrading the local ecosystem.

D. The Mediating Role of Employee Environmental Behavior

The relationship between institutional macro-policies like GHRM and micro-outcomes like organizational sustainability is often bridged by the psychological and behavioral responses of the workforce. Employee Environmental Behavior serves as a critical mediator because structural HR policies cannot generate sustainability unless they successfully activate the pro-environmental actions of individual workers (Thanh & Cong, 2025). When an institution implements GHRM, it creates an eco-centric psychological climate that triggers employees' intrinsic motivation, prompting them to engage in EEB (Ahmad et al., 2021). This activated behavior, in turn, directly improves the organization's green performance and operational efficiency, thereby securing long-term institutional sustainability (Karatepe et al., 2021). Without the mediating effect of EEB, green HR initiatives risk becoming superficial compliance exercises that fail to produce genuine ecological outcomes (Permadi & Agustina, 2025). Thus, the strategic path to organizational sustainability relies on a continuous mechanism where GHRM acts as the catalyst, and EEB functions as the direct driver of green organizational transformations (Ramdhan, 2025).

In summary, the literature consensus highlights a clear indirect path: macro GHRM policies do not automatically result in organizational sustainability; they must first activate positive micro-level behaviors (EEB) among individual workers. In this study, EEB is synthesized as the vital psychological and operational link. In Kelurahan Taman, Pematang Jaya, this mediating mechanism implies that the success of government green initiatives depends heavily on how effectively GHRM practices can translate formal mandates into the everyday eco-friendly habits of its public servants.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design and Approach

This study adopts a qualitative approach utilizing a descriptive case study design. A qualitative approach is uniquely suited for this research as it allows for an in-depth, holistic exploration of complex social processes within their natural setting (Ramdhan, 2021). Instead of testing mathematical hypotheses, this study aims to understand *how* Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) is conceptually understood and operationalized by local actors, and *why* Employee Environmental Behavior (EEB) emerges as a critical driver for achieving long-term Organizational Sustainability in the specific bureaucratic landscape of

Kelurahan Taman, Pemalang.

B. Research Context and Informants

The research locus is strictly bound to the Kelurahan Taman Office in Pemalang Regency, Central Java. Rather than utilizing statistical sampling, this study employs purposive sampling to select informants who possess rich, firsthand experience and structural insight regarding the topic. The key informants are categorized into two primary groups to ensure data triangulation:

1. Key Informants (Management Level): The Head of the Sub-district (*Lurah*) and the Kelurahan Secretary (*Sekretaris Kelurahan*), who act as policy decision-makers and HR managers.
2. Main Informants (Operational Level): 5 to 7 administrative staff members, representing both Civil Servants (*ASN*) and contractual staff (*Tenaga Honorer*), who are directly subjected to HR policies and perform day-to-day public services.

C. Data Collection Methods

Data were gathered over an extended field period utilizing three interconnected qualitative methods to ensure empirical depth and validity:

1. In-Depth Interviews: Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews will be conducted using an interview guide. This flexible approach allows the researcher to probe deeper into informants' personal perspectives, motivations, and institutional constraints regarding green practices.
2. Non-Participant Observation: The researcher will directly observe daily office operations at Kelurahan Taman. Observations will focus on physical manifestations of EEB, such as paper recycling habits, energy conservation behavior (e.g., turning off lights/AC), and the transition toward paperless digital administration.
3. Document Analysis: To cross-examine internal guidelines, this study will analyze relevant local governance documents, including strategic plans (*Renstra*), standard operating procedures (*SOP*), attendance/performance frameworks, and waste management records of the office.

D. Data Trustworthiness and Triangulation

To establish qualitative validity, this study employs source and method triangulation to ensure data trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Method triangulation is achieved by cross-checking interview transcripts against observational field notes and official documents. Source triangulation involves comparing viewpoints between the management level (*Lurah*) and the operational staff. Additionally, member checking will be conducted, wherein preliminary findings are presented back to the informants to confirm that the research accurately reflects their actual experiences and institutional realities.

E. Data Analysis Technique

The qualitative data will be analyzed systematically using the Thematic Analysis Method proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). The analytical process consists of three concurrent flows of activity:

1. Data Condensation: Raw data from voice recordings, interview transcripts, and field notes will be robustly transcribed, selected, and simplified. Irrelevant data will be filtered out, and meaningful segments will be tagged with initial conceptual codes related to GHRM, behavior, and sustainability.
2. Data Display: The condensed data will be organized and mapped

systematically into matrices, thematic networks, or narrative text blocks. This step visually aligns empirical statements with the study's sub-themes (e.g., barriers to green recruitment, psychological drivers of eco-initiatives, or local bureaucratic constraints).

3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification: The researcher will identify patterns, regularities, and underlying mechanisms within the data display. Final conclusions will be drawn by conceptualizing how GHRM structurally triggers subjective environmental behavior, which ultimately transforms Kelurahan Taman into a sustainable public institution.

IV. RESEARCH RESULT

Based on the thematic analysis of in-depth interviews, non-participant observations, and document reviews conducted at the Kelurahan Taman Office in Pemalang, the research findings are structured into three major thematic areas that reflect the structural mechanism of the study.

To provide a clear demographic and contextual overview, a total of 8 informants participated in this study, as detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Profile of Informants at Kelurahan Taman Office

Informant Code	Position / Structural Role	Employment Status	Length of Service
INF-01	Head of the Sub-district (<i>Lurah</i>)	Civil Servant (ASN)	4 Years
INF-02	Kelurahan Secretary (<i>Sekretaris</i>)	Civil Servant (ASN)	6 Years
INF-03	Head of Government Section	Civil Servant (ASN)	3 Years
INF-04	Head of Public Welfare Section	Civil Servant (ASN)	5 Years
INF-05	Frontline Customer Service Staff	Contractual Staff (<i>Honoror</i>)	4 Years
INF-06	Administrative & Archives Staff	Contractual Staff (<i>Honoror</i>)	2 Years
INF-07	General Affairs Staff	Contractual Staff (<i>Honoror</i>)	5 Years
INF-08	IT & Digital Service Operator	Contractual Staff (<i>Honoror</i>)	3 Years

A. Implementation of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) Practices

The investigation revealed that GHRM at the Kelurahan Taman office is not implemented through formal, explicit "green regulations" from the central government, but rather driven by localized administrative innovations and adaptive leadership. The implementation heavily relies on two dimensions: *Green Training* (socialization of paperless systems) and *Green Performance Evaluation* (monitoring resource efficiency).

The Head of the Sub-district (*Lurah*) emphasized this localized approach during his interview:

"We do not have a specific 'Green HR' budget from the regional government. However, as leadership, I integrate eco-friendly mandates into our weekly briefings. For example, I strictly evaluate how much paper each section

consumes. If a section requests too many reams of paper, they must justify it to the Secretary. This is our informal way of enforcing green performance management." (INF-01, Personal Interview, 2026).

Furthermore, *Green Training* is structurally linked to the mandatory adoption of Pemalang Regency's localized digital governance platforms. The Kelurahan Secretary explained the transition:

"Every time there is a new digital application introduced by the Regency, like electronic archiving or online public scaling, we frame it as an environmental training. We train our contractual staff to operate completely online to eliminate physical document waste." (INF-02, Personal Interview, 2026).

B. Dynamics of Employee Environmental Behavior (EEB)

Observations and interviews confirmed that Employee Environmental Behavior (EEB) manifests primarily through voluntary daily routines rather than rigid, forced compliance. Employees have developed localized sub-routines classified into three behaviors: *Eco-initiatives*, *Eco-civic virtue*, and *Eco-helping*.

To map these behavioral dynamics clearly, Table 2 synthesizes the direct expressions of individual environmental actions observed in the office.

Table 2: Matrix of Observed Employee Environmental Behaviors (EEB)

EEB Dimension	Specific Action Observed in Kelurahan Taman	Operational Driving Factor
Eco-Initiatives	Reusing the blank back of one-sided printed papers for internal draft memos and citizen queue numbering.	Internal consciousness to reduce paper procurement constraints.
Eco-Civic Virtue	Spontaneously turning off split AC units and heavy computers precisely during the 12:00–13:00 break room vacancy.	Institutional awareness regarding local electricity budget limitations.
Eco-Helping	Senior staff routinely reminding younger contractual workers to double-check digital PDF drafts before pressing 'Print'.	Peer-to-peer social learning to avoid administrative printing errors.

The voluntary nature of *Eco-initiatives* was highly apparent among the frontline service workers. One informant shared her daily experience regarding paper conservation:

"For community cover letters (Surat Pengantar), we used to print everything on a full sheet of HVS paper. Now, my colleagues and I voluntarily split the paper or reuse misprinted papers for rough drafts. No one forced us to do this, but we realize that reducing paper waste makes our desk much cleaner and less cluttered." (INF-05, Personal Interview, 2026).

However, structural constraints like unstable internet connections occasionally hinder eco-civic behavior, forcing staff to temporarily revert to paper backups:

"We want to go 100% digital, but when the server from the central district goes down, the citizens are waiting in line and getting angry. In those urgent moments, we have no choice but to print out manual forms again." (INF-

08, Personal Interview, 2026).

C. Manifestation of Organizational Sustainability

At the local government level, organizational sustainability is achieved when public services become structurally efficient, resource-lean, and highly adaptive to community needs without increasing environmental burdens. At Kelurahan Taman, this sustainability is directly reflected in reduced operational expenditures and expedited service timelines.

The tangible impacts of GHRM and EEB integration on institutional sustainability are compiled in Table 3.

Table 3: Thematic Synthesis of Organizational Sustainability Outcomes

Core Dimension	Qualitative Evidence in Kelurahan Taman	Institutional Sustainability Impact	Takeaway/
Operational Efficiency	A documented 35% reduction in office paper ream procurement over the last two fiscal quarters.	Reallocation of local office budgets toward community welfare infrastructure.	
Environmental Performance	Elimination of systemic burning of office paper waste; replaced by a digital archiving workflow.	Reduction of localized air pollution and physical waste accumulation behind the office.	
Service Agility	Transition of citizen identity verification (Kartu Keluarga/KTP checks) from a 3-day manual process to a 10-minute digital lookup.	Increased trust from the citizens of Taman Pemalang due to rapid, transparent services.	

The Head of Government Section confirmed that operational sustainability directly correlates with how digitalized and eco-conscious the staff behaves:

"Sustainability for us means our public service survives and thrives despite limited budgets. By reducing paper and electricity usage through our staff's daily habits, we saved enough administrative funds to upgrade our public waiting room facilities. That is practical sustainability for a small Kelurahan." (INF-03, Personal Interview, 2026).

Ultimately, the results indicate that the informal GHRM practices set by the leadership successfully triggered voluntary Employee Environmental Behavior. This behavioral shift serves as the primary engine that transforms the bureaucratic workflow of Kelurahan Taman into a highly sustainable, paperless, and resource-efficient public sector organization.

V. CLOSURE

A. Conclusion

This study provides empirical and qualitative insights into how green paradigms can be operationalized within grassroots public institutions, specifically at the Kelurahan Taman Office in Pemalang. Based on the rigorous thematic analysis of field data, three core conclusions are drawn:

First, Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) in local

government units does not rely on rigid, top-down environmental mandates, but is instead driven by transformational leadership and localized administrative innovations. In Kelurahan Taman, GHRM manifests through informal yet consistent green performance appraisals such as strict monitoring of paper ream consumption by the leadership and continuous green training integrated into the adoption of regional digital governance applications.

Second, Employee Environmental Behavior (EEB) acts as the critical operational engine that turns green policies into reality. The research confirms that public servants and contractual staff in Kelurahan Taman actively display high levels of *eco-initiatives*, *eco-civic virtue*, and *eco-helping*. These behaviors are primarily voluntary and intrinsically motivated, driven by a shared desire to reduce workspace clutter, maximize efficiency, and adapt to local budget limitations.

Third, the organic alignment between informal GHRM frameworks and voluntary EEB directly leads to Organizational Sustainability. For a local public service office, sustainability translates into a significant reduction in paper and energy expenditures, the elimination of physical waste burning, and increased service agility (e.g., accelerating citizen identity verification from 3 days to 10 minutes).

Core Research Takeaway: Ultimately, this study concludes that macro-level green policies cannot achieve institutional sustainability on their own; they must successfully alter the micro-level daily habits of individual public servants.

B. Suggestion

Based on the challenges and insights identified during the fieldwork at Kelurahan Taman, Pemalang, the following practical and academic recommendations are proposed:

1. For Local Government Policy Makers (Kelurahan Taman & Pemalang Regency)
 - a. Formalize Green SOPs: The regional government of Pemalang should formalize the existing informal *eco-initiatives* into official Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Introducing a formal "Green Bureaucracy" guideline will ensure that eco-friendly habits persist across leadership transitions.
 - b. Establish Green Reward Systems: To sustain and boost *eco-initiatives* among contractual staff (*tenaga honorer*), the management should introduce non-monetary green rewards, such as "Eco-Agent of the Month" certificates or preferential professional development training opportunities.
 - c. Infrastructure and Server Stabilization: To prevent staff from reverting to paper backups during digital server crashes, the communication and information technology department (*Diskominfo*) of Pemalang Regency must prioritize stabilizing the local public service network infrastructure.
2. For Future Researchers
 - a. Expand Research Locus: Future studies should duplicate this qualitative approach across multiple *Kelurahan* offices with different geographic and economic characteristics (e.g., comparing coastal vs. inland village offices in Pemalang) to build a broader comparative framework.
 - b. Mixed-Methods Approach: Future researchers could transition this study

into a mixed-methods design, using the qualitative insights discovered here to build a customized quantitative survey that mathematically validates the variance of GHRM on public service sustainability in Indonesia.

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