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Catalyzing change: How responsible leadership inspires green HRM and sustainable practices across Mena civil society

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Abstract: This study examines the relationship between responsible leadership and sustainable leadership, with a particular focus on the mediating role of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices. Civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the MENA region increasingly face pressure from international donors to adopt sustainability-driven practices. A quantitative, cross-sectional design was employed, using survey data collected from 250 employees across NGOs in Iraq, Yemen, and Turkey. The findings reveal that GHRM practices specifically green training, green performance management systems, and green rewards significantly mediate the relationship between responsible leadership and sustainable leadership. The results support a partial mediation effect, indicating that responsible leadership influences sustainable leadership both directly and indirectly through GHRM practices. The study contributes to the literature by integrating leadership and HRM perspectives within the NGO context and highlights implications for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goals 5, 8, 13, and 16.

Keywords: green HRM/responsible leadership; green training; green PMS; green-intensive; and responsible leadership; SDGs

1. Introduction

In recent decades, civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have gained increasing importance due to their critical role in community development and humanitarian support, particularly in conflict-affected regions. According to the World Bank, civil society encompasses a wide range of organizations, including community groups, NGOs, labor unions, and charitable institutions, all of which aim to improve societal well-being. Similarly, the United Nations defines NGOs as voluntary, non-profit entities that operate at local, national, or international levels to deliver services, advocate for public interests, and support sustainable development. In the MENA region, these organizations play a vital role in addressing socio-economic and environmental challenges. CSOs and NGOs play an essential role in domestic development as well as international development through their contribution and commitment to SDGs. In MENA region, numerous CSOs and NGOs are actively involved in humanitarian activities in Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and Jordan, addressing urgent needs brought on by natural catastrophes, conflicts, and socioeconomic difficulties. Many Foundations in Turkey changed its focus after the terrible earthquakes in February 2023 to help impacted children in need, setting up skill-development and psychosocial support centers in areas like Adıyaman and Hatay. Numerous NGOs work with foreign partners in Iraq to provide vital services, such as healthcare, education, and livelihood support, to people that have been displaced and

affected by protracted conflict. There are many CSOs in Jordan that provide support to assistance to refugees and marginalized communities, focusing on areas such as education, healthcare, and women's empowerment. Collectively, these organizations play a pivotal role in addressing the pressing humanitarian needs across the Middle East, contributing to regional stability and development. (Magharbeh, 2024). The voluntary nature of CSOs and NGOs makes human resources in these organizations a real challenge. For these organizations to succeed they need leadership committed to society and to SDGs. Accordingly, the leadership with responsible sustainable orientation could contribute to the success of these organizations (Arora, 2012)

Responsible leadership (RL) is a leadership style that gained a lot of interest and debate in organizational studies. Researchers are introducing RL as a style that promotes and sustains stakeholders' needs and interests. Responsible leadership is defined as leaders' behavior of addressing stakeholder needs, balancing stakeholder interests, and building trust and reliability with stakeholders (Voegtlin C, 2012). In the NGO sector is characterized by a commitment to ethical practices, accountability, and a focus on sustainable development. Leaders in this context are expected to demonstrate passion and altruism, organizational advocacy, community engagement, strategic focus, trust-building, delegation, continuous self-learning, and agility. These attributes enable leaders to navigate the complex challenges inherent in non-profit environments, ensuring that their organizations effectively fulfill their missions and contribute positively to society (Grace, Juliana, & Paul, 2018).

Although Responsible Leadership and Sustainable Leadership share ethical and stakeholder-oriented foundations, they differ in scope and function. Responsible Leadership focuses on stakeholder engagement and ethical decision-making processes, whereas Sustainable Leadership emphasizes long-term environmental, social, and economic outcomes. Therefore, Responsible Leadership acts as a behavioral foundation that enables the emergence of Sustainable Leadership as an outcome-oriented construct. The main theories reflected the variables as follows:

RL → creates ethical + stakeholder foundation

SL → reflects long-term sustainability outcomes

Recent studies highlight the crucial importance of responsible leadership and Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) in fostering sustainability within organizations, including NGOs in the MENA region. Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) refers to the integration of environmental management into HR practices to promote sustainable use of resources within organizations. It encompasses policies and practices aimed at making employees environmentally conscious, benefiting individuals, society, the natural environment, and the business (Shaaban, 2019) Shaaban & Rabie (2024) found that socially responsible HRM significantly impacts organizational sustainability in Egyptian companies, highlighting the importance of integrating ethical leadership with HR practices to achieve sustainable outcomes. GHRM practices positively influence employees' organizational behavior towards the environment in Palestinian NGOs, suggesting that structured green HR initiatives can enhance environmental performance. These findings suggest that fostering responsible leadership and implementing GHRM practices are crucial for NGOs aiming to enhance their sustainability efforts in the MENA region.

Sustainability has emerged as a critical driver of change, innovation, and competitiveness in today's dynamic business landscape. While large corporations have traditionally spearheaded sustainability initiatives, increasing attention is now being directed toward Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). NGOs, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, play a vital role in fostering sustainable development through revenue-generating activities that support their community-driven missions. However, despite the increasing pressure to integrate sustainability into their operations, NGOs face significant challenges in implementing effective sustainability strategies due to leadership limitations, lack of structured green human resource management (GHRM) practices, and difficulties in aligning sustainability with organizational performance.

Stakeholder Theory suggests that organizations create value by addressing the needs and expectations of multiple stakeholders, not only shareholders. This perspective supports sustainable and inclusive decision-making, enhancing long-term performance and organizational legitimacy.

Institutional Theory explains that organizational practices are shaped by external norms, rules, and societal expectations. Organizations adopt structures to gain legitimacy and align with institutional pressures, ensuring survival and credibility in their environment.

1.1. Rationale of the study

Because of its distinct socioeconomic, environmental, and governance issues, the MENA area offers an engaging backdrop for researching sustainability strategies in NGOs. Stronger leadership and HR practices are required to promote sustainable development in many MENA nations due to urgent sustainability concerns such as water scarcity, climate change, and sociopolitical instability.

NGOs are essential in tackling these issues, but their efficacy is mostly dependent on sustainable leadership tactics that encourage long-term impact, Green HRM, and responsible leadership. While Green HRM incorporates environmental issues into HR operations, guaranteeing that sustainability is ingrained in organizational culture. Responsible leadership promotes ethical decision-making and stakeholder engagement, while Green HRM incorporates environmental considerations into organizational HR practices, guaranteeing that sustainability is ingrained in business culture, while responsible leadership promotes ethical decision-making and stakeholder engagement (Renwick et al., 2013). Furthermore, NGOs can balance economic, social, and environmental concerns with sustainable leadership, which increases their adaptability and resilience.

1.2. Why study is important for NGOs:

This study is valuable because it connects leadership, HR practices, and sustainability in NGOs, focusing on the MENA region. By emphasizing responsible leadership and Green HRM, it provides a roadmap for NGOs looking to integrate sustainability into their core operations. This is particularly important in regions where sustainability challenges are acute, requiring leadership that is ethical, proactive, and

environmentally conscious, the following element shows why the study considered as important.

Sustainability has become a critical priority for NGOs operating in the MENA region due to increasing environmental, social, and economic challenges. These organizations require leadership approaches that integrate ethical responsibility with long-term sustainability strategies.

The Growing Importance of Sustainability in NGOs: NGOs are essential in tackling social and environmental issues, especially in areas like the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), where sustainability issues (like water scarcity, climate change, and economic instability) are urgent. The study will show how leadership practices impact sustainability efforts in NGOs, making it applicable to organizations that want to increase their sustainable impact. **Green HRM as a Mechanism for Sustainability in NGOs:** Green HRM refers to HR practices that support environmental sustainability, like: Eco-friendly policies (e.g., paperless offices, energy-efficient workplaces); Employee engagement in sustainability (training programs on environmental responsibility); and green talent management (hiring and developing employees dedicated to sustainability).

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The connection between responsible leadership, green human resource management, and sustainable leadership Long-term, moral, and ecologically conscious decision-making are the main goals of sustainable leadership (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006); responsible leadership improves Green HRM and makes sure that sustainability is prioritized within the company rather than merely being an issue for external lobbying. The study combines these three aspects to demonstrate how employee engagement and HR policies are used by leadership to impact sustainability.

Practical Implications for NGOs: The research assisting NGOs in creating leadership plans that complement sustainability objectives. It offers helpful suggestions on how accountable leadership can influence HR regulations and promote a sustainable culture in businesses. The study provides a framework for MENA NGOs to adopt sustainability-driven HR policies by bridging the gap between leadership theory and NGO sustainability practices.

1.3. Research gap and motivation

Existing literature highlights the growing importance of sustainability in corporate strategies, with businesses actively promoting green initiatives. However, while extensive research has been conducted on sustainability practices in large corporations, limited studies explore how NGOs and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) implement sustainability through responsible leadership and GHRM practices, particularly in the MENA region (Pakir, 2012). Many organizations struggle to embed sustainability into their daily operations, as sustainability initiatives often remain disconnected from core business strategies, leadership frameworks, and HRM practices.

Furthermore, although sustainable leadership has been widely discussed in the corporate sector (Pham et al., 2020), its integration into the NGO sector remains underexplored. There is a need for a comprehensive investigation into how responsible leadership influences sustainable leadership within NGOs and how GHRM mediates this relationship. This gap is particularly relevant given that NGOs face a dual challenge: ensuring financial viability while fulfilling their social and environmental missions.

1.4. Proposed solution and research objectives

To address these gaps, this study proposes a theoretical and empirical examination of the relationship between responsible leadership, sustainable leadership, and green HRM practices within NGOs in the MENA region. By doing so, it seeks to provide actionable insights into how NGOs can develop sustainable strategies that enhance both organizational effectiveness and community impact.

1.5. Research questions

To guide the study, the following research questions are proposed:

1. How does responsible leadership influence sustainable leadership in NGOs?
2. What role do Green HRM practices play in mediating the relationship between responsible and sustainable leadership?
3. To what extent do responsible leadership and Green HRM practices influence the implementation of sustainability strategies in NGOs in the MENA region?

This study makes significant contributions to the growing body of research on sustainability, leadership, and HRM by offering a novel perspective on how NGOs in the MENA region can foster sustainable practices. Unlike previous studies that primarily focus on corporate sustainability, this research contextualizes sustainability within NGOs, highlighting their unique structural and operational challenges. By integrating responsible leadership, sustainable leadership, and Green HRM, the study adopts an interdisciplinary approach that bridges leadership theories with HRM practices, providing a more holistic understanding of sustainability implementation in mission-driven organizations. Furthermore, the study addresses a critical research gap by focusing on the MENA region, where sustainability efforts in NGOs remain underexplored despite pressing socio-environmental challenges such as water scarcity, climate change, and governance instability.

This study offers several novel contributions to the existing literature on leadership and sustainability. First, it proposes a new integrated model that links responsible leadership to sustainable leadership through the mediating role of Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) practices, providing a more comprehensive explanation of how sustainability is operationalized within organizations. Second, the study introduces a new empirical context by focusing on civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the MENA region, which remains underexplored despite facing significant sustainability challenges. Third, it examines a new relationship by empirically testing the mediating role of specific Green HRM dimensions green training, green performance

management, and green rewards in strengthening the link between responsible and sustainable leadership.

By integrating leadership theory with HRM and sustainability perspectives, this study extends prior research and provides a nuanced understanding of how internal organizational practices translate ethical leadership into sustainable outcomes, particularly within mission-driven organizations.

The study aims to, First, assess the impact of Responsible Leadership on Sustainable Leadership within NGOs and CSOs. Second, examine the mediating role of Green HRM Practices in strengthening the relationship between responsible and sustainable leadership. Third, identify key challenges and opportunities in integrating sustainability strategies into NGO operations in the MENA region.

2. Literature review

2.1. Background about the NGOs leadership:

Because they work in a variety of social, political, and economic environments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) need strong leadership and governance frameworks to be viable and effective. NGOs operate in multi-stakeholder settings, in contrast to profit-driven organizations, where legitimacy and long-term influence depend heavily on accountability, moral leadership, and sustainable practices. To promote responsible leadership and sustainable practices, this section examines the governance models and leadership structures seen in NGOs. Regarding NGOs' Governance Structures: NGOs' governance is usually set up to provide accountability, openness, and moral decision-making. Among the most popular models of government are: First, Board-Led Governance: According to NGOs frequently have a Board of Directors or Trustees in charge of financial accountability, policymaking, and strategic monitoring. These boards are essential in making sure that leadership adheres to ethical and sustainable practices. Second, Executive Leadership Model: Many NGOs employ a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or Executive Director who oversees daily operations, implements policies, and ensures alignment with the organization's mission. The leadership style of these executives significantly influences sustainability initiatives and HRM practices. Third, decentralized vs. Centralized Structures: Some NGOs adopt decentralized decision-making, empowering regional offices and field teams, while others maintain a centralized approach where strategic decisions are made at headquarters. Governance structures impact how responsible leadership is applied across different levels of the organization

At the level of NGOs' leadership styles and procedures: The methods and styles of leadership used within governance systems determine how effective leadership is in NGOs. A few models of leadership are especially pertinent: According to Maak and Pless (2006), responsible leadership is a leadership style that prioritizes sustainability, stakeholder participation, and moral decision-making. Governance arrangements in NGOs are in line with sustainability objectives thanks to responsible leaders. Second, transformational leadership: NGOs' leaders frequently serve as change agents, motivating staff members and interested parties to strive toward a common goal of social and environmental impact. Third, Servant Leadership: Because it stresses a leader's accountability to followers, communities, and ethical obligations, this model

closely reflects the values of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Fourth, Participatory Leadership: Because NGOs are driven by stakeholders, many organizations adopt inclusive decision-making, ensuring that employees, volunteers, and beneficiaries contribute to governance processes.

Regarding the Leadership Role in the Implementation of Green HRM: The adoption and implementation of Green HRM practices in NGOs are directly impacted by strong leadership and governance frameworks. The following sustainability principles are included in HR policy by responsible leadership: First, environmentally responsible recruiting and training: Leaders have an impact on how sustainability competencies are prioritized in professional development and hiring. Second, employee involvement in sustainability projects: Employee dedication to environmental objectives is typically higher in NGOs with participatory leadership structures. Third, integrating sustainability and corporate culture: Governance structures that encourage conscientious leadership foster an organizational culture in which Green HRM is ingrained in daily operations. Regarding the difficulties in governance and leadership for sustainability: Notwithstanding their dedication to sustainability, NGOs encounter many obstacles when it comes to implementing responsible leadership in governance structures, including: First, Resource Dependence: Many NGOs rely on external funding, which can create tensions between sustainability goals and donor-driven agendas (shaaban & younis, 2025). Second, Accountability Pressures: NGOs must balance transparency and efficiency while ensuring that leadership decisions align with sustainability commitments. Third, Leadership Continuity and Capacity: High turnover in NGO leadership can hinder the consistent implementation of responsible leadership and Green HRM practices.

2.2. Responsible leadership

Responsible Leadership is defined by Shaaban, (2021) as *“RL is a dimensional approach, including different levels which are measured by different variables targeting the behaviors outside and inside the organization, behaviors and actions to improve the existing theories of the leadership, personal, individual, organizational, and the community dimensions, which all involve ethical, environmental, reflexivity and sustainability perspectives”* (Shaaban S., A Responsible Leadership Dimensional Framework Model, 2021, p. 36)

A multidimensional approach to shortcomings in current leadership frameworks and theories is the Responsible Leadership (RL) theory. This theory addresses emerging social, ethical, and environmental concerns in an increasingly interconnected world, as well as high-profile scandals at individual, organizational, and systemic levels (Pless and Maak, 2011). They focus on the responsibilities that leaders have towards various stakeholder groups, which is why this relationship is referred to as, the Center of Leadership’ Maak and Pless (2006, p39).

Responsible Leadership (RL) has been distinguished from other leadership approaches by numerous researchers and studies. Other values-centered leadership theories, such as servant leadership ethical leadership, authentic leadership (Shaaban & Hassan, A Responsible Leadership Scale: An Empirical Investigation on Responsible Leadership Dimensions.”, 2021), and transformational leadership (Bass

& Avolio, 2020) (Shaaban S., 2018), have also been discussed and differentiated from RL (Pless and Maak, 2011, p. 32) .

RL has been distinguished from other leadership techniques by many researchers and studies. Other value-centered leadership theories, such as servant leadership, ethical leadership, authentic leadership; and transformational leadership have all been discussed and distinguished from RL

RL, according to Nicola Pless and Thomas Maak, differs from conventional leadership theories primarily in that it places more emphasis on the pursuit of sustainable ideals and constructive social and environmental transformation. Furthermore, RL sets itself apart from other leadership theories with its emphasis on stakeholders on two levels: those inside and outside of organizations. According to (Maak & Pless, 2006), RL is different from other leadership philosophies that frequently concentrate on followers who are only found inside the organization.

There are clear distinctions as well as areas of overlap between responsible leadership and other leadership approaches (Miska & Mendenhall, 2018). The emphasis on organizational hierarchies and non-positional leadership within teams is one of these leadership systems' defining characteristics. The primary focus of these early theories of leadership is on the relationships and protocols inside teams, especially as they relate to the viewpoints of hierarchies.

The most recent Responsible Leadership (RL) model was introduced in 2019 during the AOM conference in Bled Slovenia. Shaaban (2019) presented a new dimensional levels module that suggests several logical framework dimensions: First, the Personal level focuses on the personality traits and behaviors of individual leaders. Second, the Individual level examines how leaders interact with and influence their followers. Third, the Organizational level highlights the context of organizations, groups, and corporate strategy. The Community level emphasizes Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), institutions, culture, and society. Finally, the Mixed level explores the connections and interactions across the levels of analysis. This module scale was published in 2021 in the *International Journal of Organizational Leadership* (Shaaban, 2021) and has been adapted for use in this study.

2.3. Sustainable leadership

Sustainable leadership reflects a growing conscious awareness among individuals who are choosing to live their lives and lead organizations in ways that take into consideration their impact on the environment, society, and the state of the global economy. The Sustainability Leadership Institute defines sustainable leaders as people who are driven to change the world by becoming more conscious of themselves and the environment in which they live. This definition depends on how leaders embrace creativity and innovation in their thinking, seeing, and interacting to arrive at a sustainable solution. SL is the one who inspires staff members to support sustainability initiatives in the interest of a better world now and in the future. However, the perspective of SL leaders is to establish a sustainable organization by being more environmentally conscious throughout, as opposed to following standard business procedures.

Evaluating and increasing understanding of the sustainability principles of RL involves considering leaders' involvement in the transformational process in addition to their responsibilities towards individuals, communities, and organizations. "An ability to influence and motivate individual, groups, organizations, and society by assessing sustainability knowledge into their principles without neglecting experience from the past, so that it can be improved continuously in present also in future," is defined as SL (Shaaban S., A Responsible Leadership Dimensional Framework Model, 2021).

The primary components of SL were acknowledged by the education sector in 2003 and included in legislation; moreover, it is limited to concentrating on elementary and high schools and must fail to draw in competent leaders (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). To do that, they have created SL models as a tool for leadership ability inside organizations that will offer good values of profit. Research in this field is still necessary (Stephens & Graham, 2010). As a result, the SL idea is gradually spreading throughout other businesses. Additionally, sustainability in corporate organizations must go beyond the conventional approach of being "green" and "socially responsible" in day-to-day operations.

Responsible Leadership and Sustainable Leadership, while conceptually related, represent distinct yet complementary constructs within the leadership and sustainability literature. Responsible Leadership is primarily concerned with ethical decision-making, stakeholder engagement, and the relational processes through which leaders balance the interests of diverse stakeholders. It emphasizes accountability, transparency, and moral responsibility in organizational actions. In contrast, Sustainable Leadership focuses on long-term value creation by integrating environmental, social, and economic considerations into strategic decision-making and organizational practices. It is more outcome-oriented, aiming to ensure organizational resilience, sustainability performance, and intergenerational equity.

From a theoretical perspective, Responsible Leadership can be viewed as a foundational antecedent to Sustainable Leadership. Drawing on stakeholder theory, responsible leaders actively engage stakeholders and incorporate their expectations into decision-making processes, thereby creating the conditions necessary for sustainable outcomes. Similarly, institutional theory suggests that leaders who demonstrate responsibility and ethical behavior are more likely to align organizational practices with societal norms and sustainability expectations. Furthermore, sustainability leadership frameworks argue that long-term sustainability cannot be achieved without leaders who prioritize ethical responsibility and stakeholder inclusiveness. Accordingly, Responsible Leadership provides the behavioral and ethical mechanisms through which Sustainable Leadership is enacted, establishing a causal pathway whereby responsible leadership practices facilitate the development and implementation of sustainable strategies and outcomes.

2.4. Stakeholder theory

Stakeholder Theory posits that organizations should create value not only for shareholders but for all stakeholders who are affected by or can influence the organization, including employees, customers, suppliers, communities, and regulators.

It emphasizes balancing economic, social, and ethical dimensions of organizational activities while fostering transparent and responsible relationships. Recent literature highlights that stakeholder engagement enhances sustainability, organizational legitimacy, and long-term performance, especially in contexts such as CSR, digital transformation, and education.

2.5. Institutional theory

Institutional Theory explains how organizational behavior is shaped by formal rules, social norms, and cultural expectations within the external environment. Organizations adopt structures and practices not only for efficiency but to gain legitimacy and align with widely accepted standards. Recent studies emphasize that institutional pressures coercive, mimetic, and normative drive organizations toward similarity (isomorphism), while newer developments explore concepts such as institutional logics and institutional work in shaping organizational change and sustainability practices.

2.6. Green HRM

Green HRM is an emerging concept in recent years, involving business policies crucial for enhancing organizational environmental sustainability and driving 'green' initiatives. The global rise in environmentalism has sparked growing interest in exploring green practices in management, marketing, retailing, and other areas (Chaudhary, 2019). The performance and impact of Green HRM on both individual and organizational levels have become a pressing focus for scholars (Yong, Yusliza, Jabbour, & Ahmad, 2020). Research from the Green HRM perspective is still in its early stages, but it is increasingly seen as a key factor in promoting organizational environmental sustainability and leadership

The term "green HRM" referred to all HRM procedures, such as "green job design and analysis," "green HR Planning," "green recruitment and selection," "green induction," "green training and development," "green performance appraisal," "green reward," and "green employee relations" (Opatha & Arulrajah, 2014) (Shah & Soomro, Effects of green human resource management practices on green innovation and behavior, 2023). Other characteristics are leadership orientation, direction, and strategic management. People are the machines that create sustainability and fund the implementation of sustainability practices within their organizations. Green HR is a process that applies an eco-friendly philosophy to HR policy, increases employee engagement, and builds organizational sustainability through cost-effective leadership (Shandra & Singh, 2016). Human resources departments and staff must be aware of the implemented healthy and positive corporate strategies and activities, and the in-depth investigation of human resource management (HRM) within the organization for environmental management under the specific leadership, that encourages this direction (Shah & Soomro, Effects of green human resource management practices on green innovation and behavior, 2023).

This study will be focused on three dimensions green training, green PMS and Green Reward.

The HR training and development program on “green training,” which should be designed and directed at all levels of employees, should prioritize the importance of reducing risks to the environment and ecological scarcities. The entire information base, as well as the activities and skills covered in the program, is geared toward teaching staff members how to minimize waste, make responsible use of organizational resources, apply low-carbon technology to energy consumption, and cut back on environmentally harmful aspects. Additionally, training allows the employee to take a more proactive role in resolving environmental issues (Zoogah, 2010). In a similar way, 437 staff participated in the survey. As (Daily, Bishop, & Steiner, 2007) shown, an organization’s ability to integrate green management and activities is closely correlated with the availability of environmental education. To prepare employees for future roles as managers and leaders, training and learning programs should apply more open-access online courses and materials. These programs should also strive to develop employee knowledge and abilities. All activities that provide employees with knowledge about environmental management in their organization, such as workshops, master classes, sessions, and experiential classes (simulation), should be included in the training program.

Green Pay and Incentive: assert that an organization’s performance and culture may be influenced toward sustainability through the application of leverage in the compensation and incentive system (Mehta & Chugan, 2015). This system ought to recognize contributions made to environmentally friendly initiatives. The green pay packages if a green talent package should acknowledge employees’ acquisition of green skills and task completion.

It is best to think of the compensation structure as a nonfinite and financial acknowledgement. Pay increases, cash bonuses, and intentions are examples of financial elements that can have a significant impact. Green Pay and Incentive: Mehta and Chugan (2015) assert that an organization’s performance and culture may be influenced toward sustainability through the application of leverage in the compensation and incentive system. Any funds given to Green Performance Management System (GPMS), state that utilizing the GPMS electronically as one of the cleanest and greenest settings is essential, as is assessing each unit’s performance in compliance with environmental performance standards like 14001. Establishing objectives for managers’ success in environmental management will strengthen organizational culture and raise the significance of environmental performance (Renwick, Redman, & Maguire, 2013). GPMS is thought to be a successful strategy for putting green performance into practice. activities ought to be recognized by

An organization’s performance is defined, evaluated, implemented, and continuously improved using a strategic and organizational plan known as PMS. It consists of tactics, resources, and measurements that help businesses empower staff members to question strategic assumptions, develop a strategic awareness of their own strategies, and improve strategic decision-making through strategic thinking and learning (Shaaban & Badway, 2022) Hypotheses 3, 4 and 5 are follows.

2.7. Green human resource management (GHRM) in NGOs

Since NGOs understand how important it is to incorporate environmental sustainability into their human resource practices, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region are adopting Green Human Resource Management (GHRM). The effects of GHRM methods, including green hiring, training, performance management, and rewards, on employees' organizational behavior toward the environment were investigated in a study that focused on Palestinian NGOs in Ramallah. The results showed a strong positive correlation between GHRM implementation and pro-environmental employee behaviors, indicating that GHRM adoption can successfully encourage environmental responsibility in non-governmental organizations. (Meraj, Nasir, Shafqat, & Indrees, 2023).

Organizations in the larger MENA area are realizing more how GHRM may improve environmental performance. For example, a study on Moroccan businesses having ISO 14001 certification looked at GHRM awareness and practice implementation. The study showed that although GHRM is still in its infancy in Morocco, its significance is becoming more widely acknowledged. Nonetheless, issues including the viability of specific GHRM procedures and the requirement for more awareness were noted.

According to these studies, NGOs in the MENA region are becoming more interested in GHRM. Organizations can improve their public image, promote an environmentally conscious culture, and advance more general sustainability objectives by incorporating green practices into their HRM initiatives.

2.8. Theories related to concepts and NGOs

There are different theories and models offer a rich theoretical foundation for understanding leadership within NGOs and sustainability practices. They are particularly relevant for guiding organizations seeking to balance mission-driven goals with effective management and impact. Examples of these theories are Triple Bottom Line (TBL) Theory developed by Servant Leadership Theory mentioned different authors such as Transformational Leadership Theory mentioned by Bass, B. M. (1985); Sustainability Leadership Model mentioned by; responsible leadership developed by Shaaban (2019); and Social Entrepreneurial Leadership mentioned by (Singh, Del Giudice, Chierici, & Graziano, 2020)

H1: *There is a positive and significantly predicted relationship between responsible leadership and sustainable leadership.*

2.9. The relationship between the study variables

2.9.1. Relationship between responsible leadership and sustainable leadership

Ethical decision-making, stakeholder involvement, and a comprehensive leadership style that takes social, economic, and environmental obligations into account are characteristics of responsible leadership (Shaaban S., 2024). Its main objectives are to provide long-term organizational sustainability, encourage responsibility, and balance the demands of various stakeholder groups (Shaaban S., A balancing act: exploring the effect of work–family conflict on women's well-being in

the workplace, 2024). Beyond short-term corporate objectives, sustainable leadership emphasizes long-term environmental, social, and economic sustainability. It also fosters values that are consistent with sustainability principles and encourages people to behave responsibly. Organizations that practice sustainable leadership can preserve their adaptability and resilience while upholding moral and acceptable business practices.

Responsible leadership emphasizes ethical behavior and stakeholder engagement, which fosters long-term organizational sustainability. Prior studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between responsible leadership and sustainable leadership. In NGOs, where accountability to donors and communities is critical, this relationship becomes even more significant.

According to Shaaban (2020), there is a close connection between sustainable leadership (SL) and responsible leadership (RL). While sustainable leadership incorporates these ideas into more general environmental, social, and economic sustainability goals, responsible leadership concentrates on moral decision-making, stakeholder involvement, and long-term value generation. According to the study, the relationship between responsible leadership and responsible employees (RE) is totally mediated by sustainable leadership (Chowdhury & Shamsher, 2023). This suggests that responsible leaders have an impact on sustainable leadership practices, which in turn encourage responsible employee behaviors. To create a workforce that is in line with moral and sustainable business practices, this highlights the necessity for firms seeking long-term sustainability to incorporate responsible leadership as a cornerstone of sustainable leadership initiatives (Shaaban, 2020).

This study conceptualizes Sustainable Leadership as a higher-order outcome of Responsible Leadership, rather than an overlapping construct, thereby addressing conceptual ambiguity in prior literature.

2.9.2. Relationship between responsible leadership and Green HR

Ethical, ecological, and socially conscious business practices form the cornerstone of the interaction between Green HRM and responsible leadership. Green HRM's emphasis on incorporating ecologically friendly techniques into HR operations is closely aligned with responsible leadership's emphasis on accountability, moral decision-making, and sustained stakeholder engagement. To promote an environmentally conscious culture inside businesses, green human resource management (HRM) integrates sustainability principles into hiring, training, and employee engagement (Renwick, Redman, & Maguire, 2013). According to the Shaaban (2024) study, responsible leaders are essential in promoting Green HRM because they incorporate sustainability into HR policies, encourage pro-environmental behavior from staff members, and make sure that HR procedures support sustainable business models and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Therefore, responsible leadership is operationally extended by Green HRM (Ren & Jackson, 2020).

Responsible leadership plays a critical role in promoting ethical behavior, stakeholder engagement, and long-term sustainability orientation within organizations. However, leadership values alone are insufficient unless they are translated into organizational practices. Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) serves as a key mechanism that operationalizes sustainability by embedding environmental values

into HR functions such as recruitment, training, performance management, and rewards. Recent studies indicate that GHRM acts as a strategic mediator linking leadership behaviors to sustainable organizational outcomes, as it aligns employee attitudes and behaviors with sustainability goals (Pham et al., 2020; Yong et al., 2020; Amjad et al., 2021). Moreover, responsible leaders influence the adoption of GHRM practices, which in turn facilitate the development of sustainable leadership capabilities at the organizational level. Therefore, GHRM practices are expected to mediate the relationship between responsible leadership and sustainable leadership.

H2: *Green HRM practices mediate the relationship between responsible leadership and sustainable leadership*

Green training is a fundamental component of GHRM that enhances employees' environmental awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary for sustainable performance. Responsible leadership fosters a culture of learning and ethical responsibility, encouraging organizations to invest in training programs that promote environmental consciousness. Empirical research suggests that green training enables employees to internalize sustainability values and translate leadership vision into practice, thereby strengthening sustainable leadership outcomes and . Furthermore, green training enhances employees' ability to engage in environmentally responsible behaviors, which supports organizational sustainability initiatives. As such, green training functions as a mediating mechanism through which responsible leadership influences sustainable leadership.

H3: *Green Training mediated positively the relationship between responsible leadership and sustainable leadership.*

Green performance management systems (PMS) play a crucial role in aligning employee performance with environmental and sustainability objectives. Responsible leadership emphasizes accountability and ethical responsibility, which can be reinforced through performance evaluation systems that incorporate sustainability metrics. Prior studies highlight that integrating environmental criteria into performance appraisal systems enhances employee commitment to sustainability and strengthens organizational environmental performance. Additionally, green PMS ensures that sustainability goals are systematically monitored and rewarded, thereby institutionalizing sustainable leadership practices. Consequently, green performance management systems act as a mediating mechanism linking responsible leadership to sustainable leadership.

H4: *Green PMS positively mediated the relationship between responsible leadership and sustainable leadership.*

Green reward systems are essential for motivating employees to engage in environmentally responsible behaviors by linking sustainability performance to incentives and recognition. Responsible leadership promotes ethical values and sustainability priorities, which are reinforced when organizations design reward systems that recognize green behaviors. Recent research demonstrates that green rewards significantly influence employee engagement in sustainability initiatives and enhance the effectiveness of GHRM practices and . By incentivizing environmentally responsible actions, green reward systems translate leadership intentions into measurable outcomes, thereby strengthening sustainable leadership. Hence, green rewards serve as an important mediating mechanism in this relationship.

H5: *Green Reward mediated positively the relationship between responsible leadership and sustainable leadership.*

3. Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research approach using a structured survey to investigate the role of Responsible Leadership, Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM), and Sustainable Leadership in fostering sustainability practices in NGOs within the MENA region. A cross-sectional design is employed, gathering data at a single point in time to test the study's hypotheses.

3.1. Research model

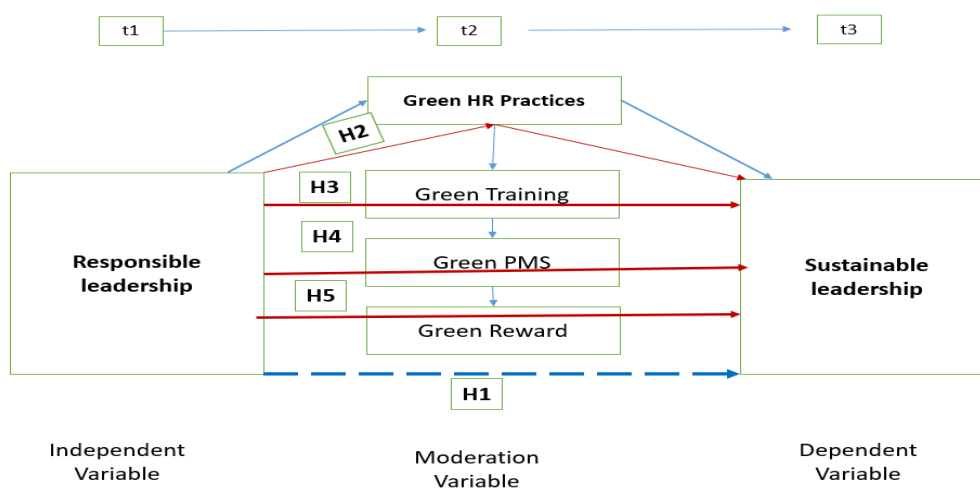


Figure 1. The study proposed a conceptual model.

3.2. Survey instrument development

Tools for measurement: The questionnaire consisted of four parts that assessed the various study variables. The first part collected demographic data, such as gender, and managerial level. The second part, measuring responsible leadership, comprises 76 items developed by (Shaaban & Hassan, 2021). The third section, which evaluated Sustainable Leadership, was adapted from, and included 53 statements. The fourth section assessed Green HRM practices, based on the framework developed by (Tang, Chen, Jiang, Jia, & Paill é 2017), and consisted of 19 items. The study concludes that responsible leadership has a significant and positive effect on sustainable leadership.

All responses ranged from (1) not at all; (2) occasionally; (3) sometimes; (4) frequently; and (5) always, on a 5-point Likert Scale in English.

3.3. Sampling technique and sample size

A purposive sampling technique is used, targeting employees, managers, and leaders working in NGOs across the MENA region. The study aimed to collect 300 responses, of which 250 valid responses were retained for analysis diverse representation across various NGO sectors in the MENA region (Iraq, Yemen, and Turkey) (e.g., environmental, social development, education). Ten CSOs and NGOs in the Middle East, especially those that run businesses to serve their communities'

initiatives that complete questionnaires, given the population size, are unknown (Sekaran, 2023). These characteristics demonstrated the equal distribution of the demographic groupings reflected in the data. The sample was chosen from 10 NGOs/CSOs working in MENA region and willing to participate in the study.

3.4. Inclusion criteria

- Employees or leaders working in NGOs for at least one year.
- NGOs actively involved in sustainability-related initiatives.
- Participants from different MENA countries to ensure regional diversity.

3.5. Data collection process

Data is collected through an online survey distributed via email, to the selected 10 NGOs out of 25 NGOs, under the capacity building program run by HAD organization (Humanitarian and Development organization). Follow-up emails are sent to increase response rates. Participation is voluntary, and responses are anonymous to ensure unbiased feedback.

- Total distributed = 300
- Returned = 270
- Valid = 250
- Final sample = 250

Data were screened and cleaned prior to analysis to ensure accuracy and reliability. This process included checking for missing values, outliers, and inconsistent responses. Incomplete and invalid questionnaires were removed, and the remaining data were verified for normality and suitability for statistical analysis.

3.6. Data analysis and hypothesis testing

The collected data will be analyzed using SPSS and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) via AMOS. The following steps will be undertaken:

A. Reliability & Validity Testing:

- Cronbach's Alpha & Composite Reliability (CR) test internal consistency.

B. Hypothesis Testing Using SEM:

- Direct Effects—Correlations and Path analysis will be used to test the direct relationships (H1).
- Mediation Analysis—Bootstrapping will be used to test whether Green HRM and Sustainable Leadership mediate the relationship between Responsible Leadership and Sustainability Practices (H2, H3, H4, H5).

All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS and AMOS software. Prior to analysis, the data were screened for missing values, outliers, and normality to ensure reliability and validity of the results.

4. Statistical analysis results and findings

4.1. Testing reliability of the variables

The internal consistency of the subscales was found to be reliably trustworthy (above 0.6) when assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. **Table 1** presents the

results regarding the scales' reliability. According to (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2016), reliability refers to the degree of consistency across different measures of a given variable. Consistent assessments of variables typically show that they are more reliable than those with lower consistency.

Table 1. Study Variables Reliability.

Scale	Responsible leadership	GHRM total	G- Training	G-PMS	G- reward	Sustainable leadership
Alpha	0.778	0.832	0.784	0.676	0.745	0.945

Sources: Author work

To test the validity of the measures used, two steps were carried out: First, the four-part questionnaire was reviewed and revised by ten experts, including five from academia and five from civil society organizations (CSOs) to examine the validity. The panel concluded that the questionnaires are valid and culturally fit in use and understandable and appropriate for this kind of organization.

As **Table 2** shows the relationship between responsible leadership and green HRM is strongly and significantly correlated, which supports H1, however, the relationship between responsible leadership and Sustainable leadership is significant but not strong, which partially supports H2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics, and Correlation of the study variables.

Correlations					
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Responsible Leadership	Green HRM	Sustainable leadership
Responsible Leadership	55.9760	8.92671			
Green HRM	196.8240	37.23152	0.817**	1	0.521**
Sustainable Leadership (SL)	83.5000	8.56829	0.257**	0.521**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In testing the first hypothesis, it is assumed that Sustainable Leadership mediates the relationship between Responsible Leadership and Responsible Employees.

As demonstrated by the previous results and tables, the regression coefficient for Responsible Leadership significantly increased with the inclusion of Green HRM. This indicates a full meditation of the relationship between responsible and sustainable leadership. This outcome was further validated through hierarchical multiple regression analysis, where both the R and R-squared values doubled, as shown in **Table 3**. Consequently, the first and second hypotheses were accepted.

The previous results shows that all survey parts had significant factors.

loadings on the latent variables. The fit indices for the factor structures listed in **Tables 5** and **6**. The multiple regression analysis indicates that there is a significant interaction between Responsible Leadership and Sustainable Leadership, which confirms the H1 and that Green HR Practices such as Training, PMS and Reward mediate the relationship between the Responsible Leadership and Sustainable Leadership, as the statistics show there is a direct relationship between Responsible Leadership and Sustainable Leadership, increased when Green HR Practices entered this relationship. To test the fit of the proposed model, which includes the Mediation

role of Green HR, a path analysis model was designed to represent the possible paths. The analytical results for the model fit and goodness-of-fit indices listed in **Table 6**.

Table 3. ANOVA.

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1206.120	1	1206.120	17.519	0.000 ^b
	Residual	17074.380	248	68.848		
	Total	18280.500	249			
2	Regression	3310.358	2	1655.179	27.310	0.000 ^c
	Residual	14970.142	247	60.608		
	Total	18280.500	249			

a. Dependent Variable: green HRM, b. Predictors: (Constant), Responsible Leadership, c. Predictors: (Constant), Responsible Leadership, Sustainable Leadership.

Table 4. Coefficients.

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		t	Sig.
		B	Std. error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	69.699	3.339			20.876	0.000
	Responsible leadership	0.247	0.059	0.257		4.186	0.000
2	(Constant)	66.413	3.182			20.872	0.000
	Responsible leadership	−0.089	0.079	−0.093		−1.120	0.264
	Green HRM	0.112	0.019	0.487		5.892	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainable Leadership

Table 5. Model Summary.

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate
1	0.257 ^a	0.065	0.063	8.29749
2	0.426 ^b	0.191	0.184	7.78511

a. Predictors: (Constant), Responsible Leadership, b. Predictors: (Constant), Responsible Leadership, Sustainable Leadership

The findings from the multiple regression analysis indicate a meaningful interaction between green HRM and responsible leadership, impacting sustainable leadership. This supports hypothesis two partially and confirms the first two hypotheses. Although the relationship between responsible and sustainable leadership is not very strong, the inclusion of green HRM in this study reveals significant associations. Consequently, green HRM acts as a complete mediator that influences the relationship between responsible and sustainable leadership.

4.2. Structural equation modeling (SEM)

The statistical analysis confirms that the necessary condition is met, as Green HRM—the mediating variable exhibits a strong association with both Responsible leadership (the independent variable) and (the dependent variable). Consequently, the H2, H3, H4 and H5 hypothesis were tested using a Structural Equation Model (SEM) in AMOS 21. This hypothesis asserts that Green HRM mediates the relationship

between Responsible and sustainable leadership. The path analysis and fit indices of the proposed model are detailed in **Table 6**.

Table 6. Fit indexes and Path analysis for the Mediation model.

Model 1		Estimate		Standardized	C.R.	P	
RL	SL	6.14		0.605	52.328	0.0001	
RL	GHRM	2.858		0.309	36.184	0.0001	
GHRM	SL	2.028		0.554	28.895	0.0001	
Standardized total effects				S. direct effects		S. indirect effects	
		RL	GHRM	RL	GHRM	RL	GHRM
GHRM		0.327	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
SL		0.691	0.630	0.295	0.000	0.419	0.000

4.3. Mediating effects of Green HRM dimensions

To provide a deeper understanding of the mediating mechanism, the three dimensions of Green HRM green training, green performance management (PMS), and green rewards were examined separately. The results indicate that all three dimensions play a significant mediating role in the relationship between responsible leadership and sustainable leadership.

Specifically, green training demonstrated a positive and significant indirect effect, suggesting that responsible leadership enhances sustainability outcomes through developing employees' environmental knowledge and skills. Similarly, green performance management systems (PMS) showed a significant mediating effect, indicating that embedding environmental criteria into performance evaluation strengthens the translation of responsible leadership into sustainable leadership practices. Furthermore, green rewards exhibited a significant indirect effect, highlighting that incentivizing environmentally responsible behaviour reinforces this relationship.

Overall, the findings confirm that each Green HRM dimension acts as a significant mediator, supporting hypotheses H3, H4, and H5. These results are consistent with the bootstrapping analysis, where the indirect effect ($\beta = 0.419$, $p < 0.001$) exceeded the direct effect ($\beta = 0.295$, $p < 0.001$), indicating a strong mediating mechanism.

The previous results that all survey parts had significant factors. loadings on the latent variables. The fit indices for the factor structures listed in **Table 3** and **4**. The multiple regression analysis indicates that there is a significant interaction between Responsible Leadership and Sustainable leadership, which confirms the H1 that Green HRM mediate the relationship between Responsible Leadership and Sustainable leadership. To test the fit of the proposed model, which includes the mediation role of Green HRM, a path analysis model was designed to represent the possible paths. The analytical results for the model fit and goodness-of-fit indices are listed in **Table 6**.

Table 6 illustrates that the indirect effect (0.419) is higher than the direct effect (0.295) and that the indirect relationship has a substantial impact (0.000). This indicates that support was provided for the mediation role. The model fits the data

reasonably well, as evidenced by the fit indices shown in **Figure 2**, which also supports the hypothesis of H2, H3, H4 and H5 Mediation role.

As **Figures 2 and 3** shows that

- Responsible Leadership $\rightarrow$ Green HRM ($\beta = 0.309^{***}$)
- Green HRM $\rightarrow$ Sustainable Leadership ($\beta = 0.554^{***}$)
- Direct path RL $\rightarrow$ SL ($\beta = 0.295^{***}$)
- Reflects your strong indirect effect (0.419)

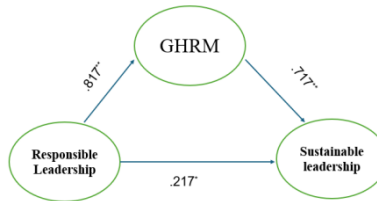


Figure 2. The Result of Structure Equation Model.

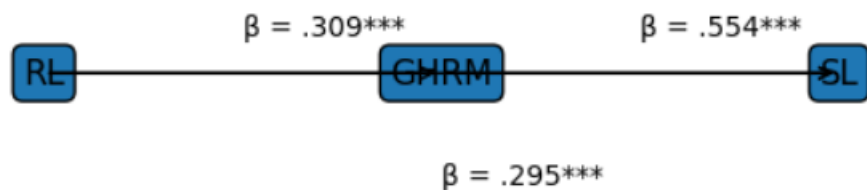


Figure 3. The Result of Structure Equation Model.

4.4. Bootstrapping and indirect effects

Bootstrapping analysis was conducted using SEM (AMOS) to assess the significance of indirect effects. A resampling procedure was applied to estimate the mediating/moderating role of Green HRM in the relationship between responsible leadership and sustainable leadership. The results indicated that the indirect effect ($\beta = 0.419$) exceeded the direct effect ($\beta = 0.295$), suggesting a stronger indirect relationship. The significance of the indirect path ($p < 0.001$) confirms the presence of a substantial effect, indicating that Green HRM plays a significant role in strengthening the relationship between responsible leadership and sustainable leadership.

Responsible Leadership $\rightarrow$ Green HRM $\rightarrow$ Sustainable Leadership

Indirect Effect = 0.419

Direct Effect = 0.295

The measurement model was assessed for reliability and validity. All factors loading exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating strong item reliability. Composite reliability (CR) values ranged above 0.70, confirming internal consistency. Additionally, the average variance extracted (AVE) for all constructs exceeded 0.50, demonstrating adequate convergent validity. Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion, where the square root of AVE for each

construct was greater than its correlations with other constructs, confirming construct distinctiveness.

5. Discussion and conclusion

The findings indicate that Green HRM plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between responsible leadership and sustainable leadership. Specifically, the indirect effect ($\beta = 0.419, p < 0.001$) exceeds the direct effect ($\beta = 0.295, p < 0.001$), suggesting that Green HRM strengthens this relationship. However, since the direct effect remains statistically significant, the results support a partial mediation effect rather than full mediation. This indicates that responsible leadership influences sustainable leadership both directly and indirectly through GHRM practices.

This study examines the mediating role of GHRM in the relationship between responsible leadership and sustainable leadership in CSOs and NGOs working in the MENA region (Iraq, Yemen, and Turkey) by applying the conceptual framework of the study as the base. The researcher developed hypotheses to achieve the study's aim. The results for H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5 indicate that the significant and positive effect of responsible leadership on sustainable leadership increases when green HRM practices (training, PMS, and intensification) have entered the relationship. These results align with findings in the literature (Shah & Soomro, 2023) (Anwar, et al., 2020) (Shaaban, 2019). These positive effects may reflect respondents' well-being to make their organizations green in HR practices to be able to achieve their sustainable leadership as a requirement of international donors such as the United Nations and UK Aid.

Even though there are a few existing studies on the relationship between responsible leadership, Green HRM and sustainable leadership, which provide theoretical support to the present study, this area is underdeveloped empirically and conceptually. (Ali, Puah, Ali, Raza, & Ayob, 2022) and supported the result GHRM is an expansion of responsible leadership that focuses on an employee's long-term success, especially when linked to employees' performance and appraisal, which is reflected in their annual bonus and increase which will lead to sustainability and gaining more funded projects. Applying GHRM actively participates in the formulation of policies, implementation of legislation, and promotion of training programs recommended by employees who support sustainable leadership (Anwar, et al., 2020). The growth of the CSOs and NGOs that participated in this study depended on sustainable human resources.

Some of the limitations of this study may be resolved by future research. This study could not examine changes in employee perceptions of responsible and sustainable leadership, particularly in relation to employee turnover within NGOs. Future longitudinal research may be applied to resolve this issue. Future studies should also be cross validated using an independent sample, considering the research used to develop the model. Additionally, the study was conducted in one sector in which NGOs and CSOs have their own culture and circumstances and demand to meet sustainability via responsible leadership, and international donors funding their projects.

In conclusion, this study makes several additions to the body of knowledge on responsible leadership, sustainable leadership, green HRM, CSOs, and NGOs. First, it offers a thorough and empirical assessment of the variable elements of green HRM practices and their relation to sustainable leadership in this sector of voluntary work. Second, this is the first study to introduce the effects of responsible leadership and sustainable leadership and the impact of green HRM practices in the CSO and NGOs sector as NGOs seeking to improve their incomes to sustain their community initiatives.

6. Impact on the SDGs

The research examines how the implementation of sustainability practices within NGOs in the MENA region, particularly through the lenses of Responsible Leadership, Green HRM, and Sustainable Leadership can contribute to achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The study highlights the influence of leadership and human resource practices on promoting environmental sustainability, social responsibility, and ethical governance within these organizations. By fostering these practices, NGOs can directly impact various SDGs, such as Goal 13 (Climate Action), Goal 5 (Gender Equality), Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and Goal 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), among others.

In short, this research aims to show how leadership styles and HR practices within NGOs can align with and advance the global agenda for sustainable development.

7. Theoretical and practical implications

By presenting empirical evidence of the connection between Green Recruitment, Selection, Training & Development, and Green Job Performance (GJP), this study adds to the scholarly conversation on Green HRM and sustainability. Among the theoretical contributions are: First, increasing Green HRM Literature: The study shows that HR functions are not just administrative but also important drivers of environmental performance, reaffirming the growing significance of HRM in sustainability research. Second, connecting theories of sustainability with HRM: This study illustrates how green HR practices can improve corporate performance and employee engagement by combining knowledge from organizational behavior, environmental sustainability, and human resource management. Third, relating HRM to the SDGs: This study connects Green HRM to SDGs 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), (Responsible Consumption and Production), and 13 (Climate Action), reinforcing HRM's role in sustainable development.

Fourth, directing Future Research Directions: The results point to the necessity of long-term research to examine how green HRM practices affect employee performance, retention, and environmental outcomes over time in various sectors and geographical areas.

This study offers a thorough framework for organizations and scholars dedicated to sustainability by addressing both theoretical contributions to Green HRM literature and the practical implementations for NGOs.

8. Policy implication

The results of this study offer useful information for developing policies in the NGO sector, especially in the MENA area. Policymakers and organizational leaders can use these findings to create policies that encourage environmental responsibility, employee engagement, and long-term sustainability. Some examples of such policies include Embedding Sustainability into NGO Governance and Strategic Policies: These policies incorporate sustainability commitments into the mission statements, governance structures, and operational frameworks of non-governmental organizations to ensure long-term environmental responsibility. To further encourage sustainable workplaces, formal green HRM policies that incorporate green hiring, training, and performance reviews should be implemented. This will help to instill sustainability in the workforce. Additionally, promoting responsible leadership via leadership development Programs by developing leadership training policies that focus on ethical leadership, sustainability-driven decision-making, and environmental responsibility. To increase their worldwide influence, NGOs should also link their internal policies with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN, including SDGs 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and 13 (Climate Action). Lastly, by working with legislators, business executives, and international organizations, we can strengthen our advocacy for government policies that support environmental and social sustainability.

9. Limitations

The results of this study have several practical implications. First, the concept of Responsible Leadership is a relatively new topic that warrants further exploration, particularly in relation to HR practices that contribute to sustainable leadership.

Second, there is a need for greater understanding among business leaders regarding leadership roles and the various leadership approaches that support Responsible Leadership, especially in the CSOs and NGOs are business it is not their target and new implementations need more responsibility as part as their responsibility toward their community, which is an essential approach supported by Sustainable Leadership, which we proved in this study.

Third, the new concept of running a business for CSOs and NGOs has not been mentioned before in the literature and missing clear guidance for this kind of organization to establish a new route, also Businesses must adapt to the evolving global market demands for sustainability by incorporating Responsible Leadership and green practices into their organizational leadership and strategies. This approach helps ensure that employees take responsibility for supporting the organization's sustainable practices. Fostering a culture of sustainability among employees is crucial for protecting the long-term viability of the business while driving future success. This becomes especially important in Civil Society Organizations, where alignment with the mission is critical for the success of the entire organization.

10. Applying the findings of the study in in real-world settings of the NGOs

For NGOs and other organizations wishing to incorporate Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices into their sustainability initiatives, the study's conclusions offer practical advice. NGOs can improve environmental impact, organizational sustainability, and employee engagement by implementing Green Recruitment, Selection, Training, and Development and embracing responsible leadership practices. The following significant applications show how these discoveries can be applied in practical contexts:

10.1. Implementing Green HRM strategies for sustainability

NGOs can incorporate Green HRM practices into their operations by: Green Recruitment & Selection: Giving preference to applicants who exhibit a dedication to sustainability and environmental awareness. Sustainability-related skills should be included in job descriptions, and candidates' environmentally conscious actions should be assessed during the selection process; Green Training & Development: Providing staff with regular training on environmental best practices, sustainable resource usage, and climate-friendly workplace behaviors. To create a green workforce, NGOs can offer online courses, workshops, and awareness campaigns; Establishing Green Job Performance (GJP) metrics to gauge staff members' contributions to sustainability initiatives is known as "green performance evaluation." Employees who actively support environmental initiatives should be rewarded, and sustainability goals should be included in performance reviews.

10.2. Encouraging responsible leadership practices

The report emphasizes how crucial leadership is in advancing green efforts. NGOs ought to: Adopt Transformational Leadership Styles: Leaders ought to include green principles into daily operations and decision-making in order to inspire, motivate, and set an example; Involve Workers in Sustainability Efforts: Establishing forums for cooperative green projects, like environmental projects headed by employees, can boost dedication and creativity in sustainability; Set Specific Sustainability Goals: SDGs 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and 13 (Climate Action) should all be in line with leaders' quantifiable sustainability goals.

10.3. Enhancing organizational sustainability through policy implementation

Developing Green Policies: Formally establishing sustainability policies that incorporate green hiring, training, and job performance measures to direct HR procedures is one-way NGOs can institutionalize green HRM techniques. Integrating Sustainability into Organizational Culture: To encourage an ecologically conscious workforce, non-governmental organizations should incorporate green ideals into their mission statements, workplace regulations, and reward schemes; Working Together with Outside Sustainability Projects: collaborating with global sustainability

initiatives, businesses, and government agencies to increase the effectiveness of green HRM practices.

10.4. Measuring and improving green HRM effectiveness

To guarantee ongoing progress, NGOs ought to: Track Sustainability KPIs: Assess the success of green hiring, training, and job performance programs on a regular basis. Conduct feedback sessions and employee surveys: Evaluate how staff members feel about green HRM practices and modify plans as necessary. Adjust Human Resources Policies to New Sustainability Trends: To ensure long-term efficacy, stay current with international best practices in green human resource management.

11. Recommended future research in the study area

Future studies should keep examining how NGO sustainability initiatives are fueled by sustainable leadership, Green HRM, and responsible leadership, especially in the MENA region. By filling in these gaps, academics may offer practical advice to enhance leadership training, HRM tactics, and sustainability regulations in the nonprofit industry. The following topic can be suggested for further research Longitudinal Studies on Responsible Leadership and Sustainability; Cross-Cultural Comparisons of Green HRM in NGOs; Employee Engagement and Green Organizational Citizenship Behavior (GOCB); Sustainable Leadership and Organizational Resilience; and Measuring the Effectiveness of Green HRM Practices in NGOs.

Conflict of interest: The authors declare they have no competing interests.

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