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**Research Article** 

# The Role of Digitalization of Human Resources Management (HRM) Practices in Promoting Employees' Green Creativity: An Analytical Study

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: 18 Aug 2023 Accepted: 19 Oct 2023	The primary objective of this study is to assess the level of interest in research variables within the Directorate General of Middle Euphrates Electricity Distribution. Furthermore, this study examines the impact of digitalization of human resources management (HRM) practices on enhancing green creativity among employees. This study used a descriptive-analytical approach to examine the theoretical framework of the research variables. Data collection involved obtaining a random sample of 240 employees from the public organization under study. The research hypotheses were subsequently assessed using the SMART PLS statistical tool. The study yielded several findings, with the most noteworthy being that the public institution under investigation can enhance employees' propensity to adopt environmentally friendly workplace behaviors through digitized human resource management (HRM) practices. Furthermore, electronic recruitment has emerged as a potent tool for developing and enhancing habits related to green innovation. Public institutions should prioritize employees and nurturing their creative abilities. This study provides comprehensive suggestions for effectively incorporating critical factors into adopting crucial variables within Iraq's environmental business, specifically focusing on the energy sector. Considering the characteristics of the industry, it is institution's organizational culture and philosophy. This would have a positive impact on its future endeavors.

Keywords: Digitization of Human Resources Management, Green Creativity, Electronic Recruitment.

# INTRODUCTION

Numerous scholars and academics have posited that organizations that genuinely prioritize and actively pursue creativity and innovation stand to gain significant advantages by attaining prominent positions in environmentally sustainable and resource-efficient production. This, in turn, can enhance their corporate reputation and expand their market share (Yong, Yusliza, & Fawehinmi, 2019). Business organizations can turn green creativity into sustainable products or services to mitigate environmental damage. Developing original and valuable green concepts for producing green products, services, or practices is called green creativity (Eide, Saether, & Aspelund, 2020). It can be achieved by using the digital revolution in recent years in various fields of business, which has not excluded the field of human resource management (HRM), leading to changes in the relevant procedures and function redistribution (Zavyalova et al., 2022). Digital technologies have a prominent role in employees' lives as the methods of managing HR departments change rapidly due to ongoing advances in digital technology. The concerned departments should promptly address these accelerated changes and adapt their strategies and actions to the needs of the new labor market. It can be performed by seeking employment methods, appropriate professional development, and remuneration (Parkar et al., 2021). Although various attempts to investigate the correlation between the two variables (green creativity behaviors and digitization of HRM practices) have been made, the correlation between the two variables has not yet been verified and indicated that future studies could develop

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measures at multiple levels to investigate green creativity and emphasize the creative assessment of individuals through their actual capability to produce creative outcomes. Therefore, the current research seeks to discover the correlation between the two variables and verify the impact extent of digitizing HRM practices on employees' green creativity behaviors at the Directorate General of Middle Euphrates Electricity Distribution. The significance of this lies in the strategic importance of the electricity sector," the field of research," as well as the damage it might cause to society and the environment, which necessitates the implementation of unconventional practices that will improve employee efficiency and uphold a safe and healthy environment.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

Although there has been some literature on the digitization of HRM practices, there is still ambiguity surrounding the effective implementation of HRM digitization policies in organizations globally to attain a perfect corporate culture (Ahmad, 2015). Due to the ongoing environmental damage, people are becoming more aware of the importance of purchasing and utilizing eco-friendly items (i.e., green products). Furthermore, environmentally conscious businesses that try to create eco-friendly items have been growing worldwide (Almagtome, Al-Yasiri, Ali, Kadhim, & Heider, 2020). Green creativity has gained much interest from green businesses as an essential capacity to generate new and practical ideas for green product development. Currently, one of the most essential variables in organizational efficiency is the implementation of green creativity behaviors. Organizations need many human interactions, concepts, information exchange, comprehensive thinking, and effort. As a result, the availability of a specific set of technologies has become essential to the business's success and the production of novel concepts for energy efficiency to save power (Jiang et al., 2021). In human resource management, several trends have emerged because of digital business changes (Westerman, Bonnet, & McAfee, 2014). Terms such as "digitization," "digitalization," "digital transformation," and "digital disruption" are today wellrecognized and much-debated concepts. These themes refer to a growing reliance on technology and the consequential significant transformations in several sectors of the economy and society. This assertion also holds in human resource management (HRM).

Novel human resource management models and their implementation are required to adapt corporate strategies to the circumstances of a dynamic digital economy. The success of companies (such as Google, Nike, Amazon, Apple, and Disney) is highly dependent on such models. Achieving success in the field of digitizing HRM practices primarily depends on applying proper methods of work, which have a positive influence on employees' creative behaviors. As described by most experts, the fundamental objective is to facilitate work (Dumont et al., 2017).

## The Concept of Digitization HRM Practices

Currently, terms or concepts including "digitization,"

"digital transformation," and "digital disruption" are among the most widely recognized and frequently discussed. Such concepts, roughly speaking, signify a growing constant use of technology and related significant changes in several society and business domains. This concept is also genuine for the HRM domain. Human capital theory, initially developed by Smith, describes how employees' skills and attributes beneficially impact the production process. Later, Schultz revised this theory, emphasizing the importance of personal development. Most businesses still hold to this approach and acknowledge human resources as an essential aspect of competitive advantage (Jayabalan et al., 2021). The clarity of the concept of digitization of HRM practices is crucial for several interconnected reasons, and it is vital not only for improving conceptual clarity but also for preventing the mere proliferation of concepts (Suddaby, 2010).

Digital human resource management and other pertinent concepts should go beyond being merely "new terms for old phenomena." If not, new terms (concepts) will be used as synonyms for more well-known ones, most notably the wellknown concept of electronic human resource management (Strohmeier, 2020). Digitization is a widespread organizational phenomenon that affects all organizational domains, not just human resource management (Bohnsack et al., 2018). The technical process of converting analogous information into binary digits (hence designating digitization) to process it automatically is called digitization. When digitizing a library, human purposes and tasks would be considered (Strohmeier, 2020). Researchers stressed that digital transformation refers to the substantial changes that occur in human resource management, and this enhances the great importance of these concepts if many organizations shift to deal with the increasing speed. Therefore, applications designed in this method consist of numerous independently deployable microservices. Human resource management can be viewed as a conceptual development of earlier conceptions of HRM based on technology (Hameedi et al., 2021). Mainly, it is clear that the innovative strategic integration of digital technology based on "digital human resource strategies " involves both tremendous opportunities and massive obstacles and challenges (Strohmeier, 2020). Strategies of digital human resources, particularly, can be described as ideas regarding combining human and technological resources to create corporate advantages (Barney, 1991).

Exploiting the digitization potential for strategic purposes is closely related to the concept of digital transformation. Transferring the entire concept to human resource management does not mean merely aligning digital technologies with human resource strategies formulated in advance, but formulating and applying strategies of human resources depend directly on the digitization potentials for creating value for organizations. In order to make this notion concrete, it makes sense to apply the digital business strategy concept to human resources management. At the same time, a digital human resource strategy can be defined as a human resources strategy created and implemented by utilizing the potential of digitization to add value to an organization (Bharadwaj et al., 2013). Three main areas of digital technology can impact the field of human resource management (Fedorova, Koropets, & Gatti, 2019) as follows:

1. Digital workforce: introducing novel management methods, an innovation and sharing culture, and practical skills that can play a considerable role in creating an organization with a new network.

2. Digital workspace: designing work environment and using up-to-the-minute communication tools (such as Microsoft Teams, Slack, and Workplace by Facebook)

3. Digital Human Resource Management: using digital applications and tools to provide solutions, conduct experiments, and introduce innovations.

E-HRM can be defined as using web technology-based platforms to effectively implement human resource management (HRM) plans, policies, and practices inside a business. E-HRM refers to the contemporary concept of ITenabled HRM, mainly facilitated by web-based technologies.

The current research adopts the researchers' scale (Jayabalan et al., 2021) in measuring the variable of digitization of HRM practices through four dimensions: (Electronic -recruitment, electronic training and development, electronic performance appraisal, electronic -compensation), and we will explain them briefly as follow:

#### Recruitment

Due to the extensive use of technology, conventional methods and tools for hiring and choosing employees have been substantially replaced by digital alternatives that primarily depend upon social networking websites and other web-based platforms, such as Facebook (Jayabalan et al., 2021). Recruitment indicates attracting, screening, and selecting talents, i.e., the most suitable employees regarding skills, experience, and competencies. Moreover, Recruitment is time-consuming and expensive, but hiring the best employee at the lowest cost is a competitive advantage for companies, allowing them to survive in the market. Small businesses often use informal recruitment processes without a dedicated HR department. Mochi et al. (2017) confirmed in their research that online networking enables fast access to many possible candidates with various capabilities and skills and increases the hiring process's efficiency and effectiveness. Moreover, professional and non-professional social media can be used to carry out this process. Efforts to improve recruitment and selection benefit the organization's work and contribute to creating a solid human resource from the outset.

## **Training and Development**

Digital technology has significantly affected how people work during the last few decades. Training is a planned activity comprising data, knowledge, abilities, skills, and attitudes that improves employee performance (Jayabalan et al., 2021). The human resource activity is significant to achieve the organization's objectives. Furthermore, the influence of e-learning on training and development has been beneficial. It benefits employees by enhancing their transferable abilities, essential in both present and future work environments, and their teamwork ability (Jooss & Burbach, 2017).

#### **Performance Appraisal**

Digitization technology affects performance appraisal, and employee performance at the workplace is strongly correlated with digital technology utilization. If there is cooperation between the company's departments, this technology may be used effectively (Jayabalan et al., 2021). Performance appraisals can be improved if the human resource department functions in paperless synergy and data innovation, making the performance appraisal process more visible, objective, and robust. Ostensibly, transparency in all learning activities makes it possible to share performance appraisal policies and procedures within organizations, promoting simplicity and the perception of reasonable outcomes influencing the decision-making of the many parties involved (Klett, 2019).

## Compensation

Technology has affected human resource functions since it supports organizations' needs through technology-based channels, allowing data to be viewed or modified. Besides, digitization has impacted human resource practices, showing that switching to an electronic payroll assisted organizations in streamlining their employee remuneration procedures (Jayabalan et al., 2021). Numerous Organizations have benefited from technological support and human resources information system solution software for their administrative concerns. They move towards innovative human resources digitization practices that require reduced recruitment costs, time, and maintenance (Jayabalan et al., 2021). Using these technologies with secured access to compensation or payroll information can be effectively accessible by everyone (Hartwell, 2018).

#### **Green Creativity**

Linguistically, creativity can be defined as "bringing something unparalleled in quality and perfection, where this thing is an unprecedented innovation. When noticing the term creativity in any individual, the concepts of distinction and innovation will immediately cross into mind. Therefore, here, we should distinguish between creativity and innovation, as the first is to bring an idea. At the same time, the second is the ability to implement ideas in a modern and unconventional way. Creativity refers to bringing novel and valuable ideas by people or a small group working together (Amabile, 1988). These ideas can be anything new, such as products, services, processes, or practices (Almagtome, Khaghaany, & Önce, 2020). The concept of employee green creativity is defined by Jiang et al. (2021) as "the generation of novel and practical ideas for green products. Despite commonly used in green creativity research, this definition can only be reflected in the product dimension. It is unclear, though, if the product fully accounts for green creativity. Hence, it is unfair for managers to assume that a new employee who has no prior expertise in the research and development of green products is someone who has no or low level of green creativity. To solve this problem, Jiang et al. (2021) presented a developed definition of employee green creativity, a multi-dimensional model of green innovation that is a comprehensive capacity for employees to develop green products. Accordingly, green creativity did not revolve around the product as rumored but went beyond that to move to the overall capacity of employee behavior (Jiang et al., 2021).

In this context, Bhutto et al. (2019) argued that employees undeniably need green intrinsic motivation. Here, employees having inner motivation and passion for nature contrive to protect the business environment from the risks arising from energy consumption, excessive use of carbon-based products, and other waste. Thus, this motive involves love and passion for preserving and caring for the environment. For example. When engineers work on innovation relevant to recycling waste batteries and contribute to minimizing problems related to waste discharging and contamination, those engineers need intrinsic motivation for eco-friendly and sustainable innovation. Thus, environmental passion and love can be viewed as a natural phenomenon and a vital component of green intrinsic drive. Employees more intrinsically motivated to innovate green and clean products may develop more green creative notions. Employees' extrinsic behavior can be controlled by green extrinsic motivation. Green extrinsic motivation can refer to performing a green, sustainable, or eco-friendly behavior action to minimize waste, increase efficiency, and conserve the environment since this conduct may result in some distinct outcomes such as receiving rewards, approval from others, or avoiding punishment (Al-Wattar, Almagtome, & Al-Shafeay, 2019). The nascent stage of development is currently being witnessed in the idea of Green HRM, which encompasses several approaches such as green hiring and selection, green training, engagement, and development, green performance and reward, green performance management and appraisal, and green employee involvement. Numerous firms have previously implemented green human resource management (HRM) as a strategic method to enhance environmental corporate management.

From all of the preceding, we can formulate the following definition of employee green creativity as an activity or proenvironmental behavior practiced by working people in organizations to preserve the environment to obtain a reward or natural drive of personal needs stemming from the natural passion for the love and preservation of the environment. Based on the research conducted by Jiang et al. (2021), their measure of green creativity will be adopted, consisting of four dimensions:

## **Green Creative Motivation**

Green creative motivation indicates the inner motivation to develop new and practical concepts for green products. By supporting creative self-efficacy, such inner and intrinsic motivation might drive employees to take an active role in the creative process of developing green products. Employees with high intrinsic desires will feel they can act in the environment. Consequently, creative concepts for green products will be drastically enhanced. Furthermore, green creative motivation can assist employees in forming an "internal causality chain." This chain can stimulate them to perceive the valuable results of their creative efforts in developing green products. Additionally, academic research and scholars have shown that intrinsic motivation boosts cognitive flexibility, increasing creativity. Thus, intrinsically motivated employees are more inclined to develop creative concepts when developing green products than those lacking this desire (Jiang et al., 2021).

#### **Green Creative Thinking**

Green creative thinking means the cognitive capabilities to develop new and practical notions regarding green products. Personal creative thinking is the foundation for creativity in all stages of the creative process, such as finding and solving problems. Green creative motivation can be insufficient to form green creativity. Therefore, employees should also depend on their creative thinking, such as cognitive style and flexibility in implementing a solution (Shalley et al., 2004). Employees should think about the environment flexibly, challenges related to comprehensively, and persistently. Employees with creative cognitive patterns can frequently search for, integrate, and redefine creative problem-related information from various sources. Additionally, those with cognitive flexibility are experts in capturing creative ideas and extending cognitive categories (Dreu, 2011).

## **Green Creative Behavior**

Green product development is a dynamic and complex process; therefore, employees must engage in various tasks, for example, learning new skills, communicating, and sharing knowledge with others when implementing the solution (Jiang et al., 2021). The ability to engage in activities that create practical and novel ideas for green products is called green creative behavior. Employees must also have a culture of cooperating with fellow employees, sharing knowledge and skills, and gathering information in several ways to achieve a challenging creative objective. Realizing innovative ideas concerning green products requires green creative behavior. Employees must maintain static capacities and boost dynamic capacities through creative activities when creating green products.

#### **Green Creative Outcome**

Employees in green businesses must produce creative outcomes, such as creating green products and services. Green creative outcomes refer to the capacity to accomplish creative strives of creating new and practical ideas for green products. When employees develop and implement green products, we prioritize their creative ideas' rapidity, quality, quantity, and value. Moreover, employees need to contribute a considerable number of resources, including time, materials, financial support, and humans, and produce creative outcomes to maintain the system of developing green products. As a result, similar to the prevailing view of the current literature, this research sets green creativity outcomes as one of the main dimensions of employee green creativity. Accordingly, employee green creativity is a comprehensive capability that integrates green creative motivation, thinking, behavior, and outcomes (Jiang et al., 2021).

# METHODOLOGY

The research used a questionnaire form to measure its

variables; the variable of digitization of HRM practices is measured using Jayabalan et al. (2021), which includes (12) items, while the green creativity variable is measured using Jiang et al. (2021), which includes (14) items. The research uses a 5-point Likert scale for the answers of respondents. The reliability of the research scale will be verified by obtaining the reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha). Furthermore, a descriptive analysis (meaning, standard deviation, percentage) will also be conducted to verify the availability level of research variables in the studied public institution. The study hypotheses will be tested using the statistical program (SmartPLS) to determine the nature and intensity of the impact on the research variables.

# **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The researchers calculate the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for verifying the extent to which a scale with its main variables and their sub-dimensions is consistent with the required constancy, which is shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Reliability Coefficients

Variables	Item No.	Cronbach's Alpha		
ER	3	0.718		
ET	3	0771		
EP	3	0.757		
EC	3	0.822		
DHR	12	0.836		
МО	4	0.777		
TH	4	0.756		

Variables	Item No.	Cronbach's Alpha		
BH	4	0.748		
OU	4	0.730		
GCE	16	0.823		
Full Scales	28	0.875		

The researchers computed the statistical descriptive indexes (mean, standard deviation, and percentage) related to the research variables, as illustrated in Table 2. The mean of the digitization of HRM practices' variable is (2.86), less than the hypothetical mean estimated at (3) due to using a 5point Likert scale in this study. The standard deviation value is (0.92), indicating that the level of interest of researched public institutions in this variable reaches (0.57). The dimensions representing this variable can be shown as the following: regarding the level of interest of the studied public institution, the electronic training dimension ranks first, reaching (61%). Moreover, the performance appraisal dimension ranks second, which reaches (57%). The ecompensation dimension reaches (55%) while the electronic recruitment dimension is (54%). It is clear from the results that there is a significant lack in the human resources digitization variable in the public institution under study. Table 2 shows these results.

Based upon the indexes of the descriptive statistics presented in **Table 2** related to the employee green creativity practices variable. They do not achieve the interest levels consistent with the work nature of this institution. The interest levels were in low percentages, and the means of the green creativity variable's dimensions were less than the hypothetical mean.

Table 2. The Percentages and the Means of the Green Creativity Variable's Dimensions

Items	The Mean	Standard Deviation	Percentage	
Electronic Recruitment	2.732	0.975	0.5464	
E-training	3.070	0.823	0.614	
Electronic Performance Appraisal	2.876	0.967	0.5752	
Electronic Compensation	2.772	0.971	0.5544	
Digitization of HR Practices	2.8625	0.923	0.5725	
Green Creative Motivation	2.863	0.948	0.5726	
Green Creative Thinking	3.320	0.783	0.664	
Green Creative Behavior	2.718	0.953	0.5436	
Green Creative Outcomes	2.903	0.987	0.5806	
Green Creativity Practices of Employees	2.951	0.944	0.5902	

The research seeks to verify the central effect hypothesis, which states (that there is a statistically significant effect of the HR digitization variable on the employee green creativity practices at the total level of the two variables) The main hypothesis branches off into three sub-hypotheses:

1. The dimension of e-recruitment has a statistically significant effect on the employee green creativity practices variable.

2. The dimension of e-training has a statistically significant effect on the variable of green creativity practices

of employees.

3. The dimension of e-compensation has a statistically significant effect on the variable of employee green creativity practices.

The researchers use the statistical program (SmartPLS) to verify the plausibility of the research hypothesis. A structural model is designed, including the items for the research variables, which comprises 26 items. The HR digitization variable is represented by q1 to q12. The items from q13 represent employees' green creativity practices to q26. Based upon the results of the analysis presented in **Figure 1**, **Figure 2**, and **Table 3**, all the model items achieved acceptable saturation rates, except two items (q27 and q28). These two items were excluded from the model because their saturation

fell below the permissible threshold, which should be greater than (0.40). **Figure 1**, **Figure 2**, and **Table 3** show the results of testing the central hypothesis.

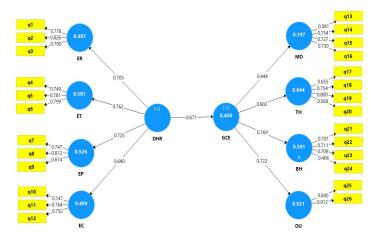


Figure 1. Results of Testing the Central Hypothesis

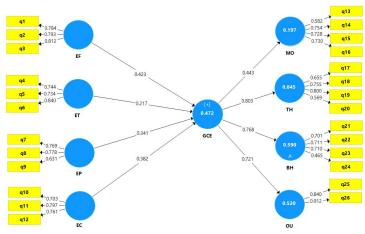


Figure 2. Results of Testing the Central Hypothesis

#### Table 3. The Results of Sub-impact Hypothesis

The Path of the Hypothesis	Impact Factor β	R <sup>2</sup> Value	Standard Deviation	T-value	Significance Level	Result
Human Resources Digitization - > Green Creativity Practices	0.671	0.450	0.062	10.785	0.000	Accepted
E-recruitment -> Green Creative Behavior Practices	0.423	0.472	0.075	2.816	0.005	Accepted
E-training -> Green Creative Behavior Practices	0.217		0.080	2.725	0.007	Accepted
E-performance Appraisal -> Green creative Behavior Practices	0.341		0.068	5.005	0.000	Accepted
E-compensation -> Green Creative Behavior Practices	0.382		0.070	2.632	0.009	Accepted

Source: SMART PLS outputs.

Based on **Figure 1**, **Figure 2**, and **Table 3**, the human resource digitization variable significantly affects the employee green creativity variable. The impact coefficient reaches (0.671) with a significant difference of 0.05, indicating

that the employee green creativity practices increase by (67.1%) when human resource digitization changes increase by one unit. Moreover, the digitization of human resources explains (45%) of the total variation occurring in the

employee green creativity variable, which is the determination coefficient value (R  $^2$  =0.450) and is a good value.

Based upon these results, the central effect hypothesis is accepted, stating that human resource digitization has a statistically significant effect on employee green creativity practices at the total level of the two variables.

Furthermore, combined Human resources digitization dimensions can explain (47.2%) the changes happening in green creativity practices, i.e., the coefficient of determination value ( $R^2$ =0.472).

# **CONCLUSION**

The process of digitizing human resources operations requires more significant effort and attention from top managers working at the Directorate General of Middle Euphrates Electricity Distribution, according to the analysis results. Furthermore, the findings suggest constraints in implementing e-training, performance assessment, and ecompensation procedures. Government institutions have not fully embraced these techniques except e-training, which has garnered a relatively favorable degree of attention. The notable level of interest observed can be attributed to the active engagement of several employees within this directorate in e-training courses, e-seminars, and eworkshops. This heightened participation has become particularly prominent considering the widespread impact of the Coronavirus. Without question, online training has been the predominant option for this school, especially for individuals who are seeking training programs to advance their careers. The study's findings also indicate a deficiency in the directorate's engagement with green creative practices, highlighting the necessity for more focus on incorporating green creativity principles into its organizational culture. Disinterest was apparent in green creative behavior, motivation, and outcomes. However, the organization is contemplating implementing measures to encourage employees to engage in green creative activities. The evident inclination towards embracing environmentally conscious practices within the workplace necessitates disseminating knowledge among all employees rather than solely relying on decisions made by upper-level management. Furthermore, it has become apparent that the implementation of digital technology in human resources practices has a beneficial and impactful effect on fostering environmentally conscious creative practices among the employees of this organization. Furthermore, it has been determined that the e-recruitment technique is the most significant factor influencing employee green creativity habits, along with the sound effects of other digitization methods. The Directorate General of Middle Electricity Euphrates Distribution should prioritize environmentally friendly practices and fully embrace digitalization, following well-structured and researched programs and work plans that consider the institution's and its employees' interests.

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