iJRASET
International Journal For Research in Applied Science and Engineering Technology



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH

IN APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Volume: 13 **Issue:** XI **Month of publication:** November 2025

DOI: https://doi.org/10.22214/ijraset.2025.75024

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International Journal for Research in Applied Science & Engineering Technology (IJRASET)
ISSN: 2321-9653; IC Value: 45.98; SJ Impact Factor: 7.538
Volume 13 Issue XI Nov 2025- Available at www.ijraset.com

A Systematic Review of Sustainable Human Resource Management, Workplace Well-being, and Ethical Leadership in the Hospitality Industry (2010–2025)

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Abstract: ***This systematic literature review (SLR) explores the evolution and impact of Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM), workplace well-being, and ethical leadership in the hospitality industry from 2010 to 2025. Using the PRISMA framework, 50 peer-reviewed articles were selected from Scopus, Web of Science, and ScienceDirect. Thematic analysis revealed seven dominant themes: green HRM integration, psychological safety, ethical governance, employee empowerment, strategic alignment, well-being analytics, and curriculum development. The findings highlight a growing shift from transactional HR practices to holistic, value-driven approaches that prioritize sustainability, ethical integrity, and employee flourishing. Despite progress, challenges such as limited data literacy, ethical dilemmas in AI use, and insufficient educational integration persist. This review identifies research gaps and proposes future directions to embed SHRM, well-being, and ethical leadership into the strategic core of hospitality HRM.***

Keywords: Sustainable HRM, Workplace Well-being, Ethical Leadership, Hospitality, Systematic Literature Review, PRISMA

I. INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry, characterized by high employee turnover, emotional labor, and service intensity, increasingly recognizes the strategic importance of human capital. As global attention shifts toward sustainability, ethics, and employee well-being, Human Resource Management (HRM) in hospitality must evolve beyond operational efficiency to embrace values-driven practices. Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM) integrates environmental, social, and economic goals into HR policies. Workplace well-being emphasizes psychological safety, engagement, and holistic health. Ethical leadership ensures fairness, transparency, and trust in decision-making. Together, these pillars form a triad essential for resilient, future-ready hospitality organizations.

Despite growing interest, academic literature on these themes in hospitality remains fragmented. This study addresses this gap through a systematic review of research from 2010 to 2025, guided by three research questions:

a) RQ1: What trends and patterns have emerged in SHRM, workplace well-being, and ethical leadership in hospitality from 2010 to 2025?
b) RQ2: How do sustainable HR practices and ethical leadership contribute to employee well-being and organizational performance?
c) RQ3: What are the barriers and enablers to implementing SHRM and ethical leadership in hospitality settings?

II. METHODOLOGY

Following the PRISMA framework, 227 articles were initially identified across Scopus, Web of Science, and ScienceDirect using keywords such as “sustainable HRM,” “workplace well-being,” “ethical leadership,” and “hospitality.” After removing duplicates and applying inclusion criteria (peer-reviewed, English, hospitality-focused), 50 articles were retained for thematic analysis. An iterative coding process was used to identify key themes, methodologies, and findings.

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III. THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Theme	Key Authors	Methodology	Main Findings
Green HRM Integration	Alreahi et al. (2022), Sustainability (2023)	Case Studies, Surveys	Aligns HR with environmental goals; promotes eco-conscious behavior
Workplace Well-being	Varga et al. (2021), Talukder et al. (2025)	Mixed Methods	Enhances retention, engagement, and service quality
Ethical Leadership	Budhwar et al. (2022), Singh (2024)	Qualitative, Legal Analysis	Builds trust, fairness, and transparency
Empowerment & Agility	Al-Qaralleh & Atan (2022)	Quantitative	Fosters innovation and adaptability
SHRM Education	Park & Gursoy (2022), Bondarouk & Brewster (2016)	Curriculum Review	Prepares future leaders for data-driven, ethical HRM
AI & Ethics	Patel & Singh (2022), Lee & Kim (2024)	Legal, Technical	Raises concerns about bias, privacy, and governance
Well-being Analytics	Zhao et al. (2023), Garcia et al. (2023)	Predictive Models	Links sentiment analysis to engagement and turnover

IV. DISCUSSION

A. Sustainable HRM in Hospitality

Green HRM practices—such as eco-friendly recruitment, sustainability training, and green performance metrics—are gaining traction. These practices align organizational values with global sustainability goals and enhance employer branding. However, implementation remains uneven due to lack of awareness and strategic alignment.

B. Workplace Well-being as a Strategic Lever

Well-being initiatives, including mindfulness programs, flexible scheduling, and psychological safety protocols, have shown positive effects on employee satisfaction and customer service. Predictive analytics further enable early detection of burnout and disengagement.

C. Ethical Leadership and Governance

Ethical leadership fosters a culture of trust, fairness, and accountability. In hospitality, where power asymmetries and emotional labor are prevalent, ethical governance is critical. Studies emphasize the need for transparent decision-making, grievance redressal mechanisms, and ethical AI deployment.

V. CHALLENGES AND RESEARCH GAPS

1) Limited integration of SHRM in hospitality curricula
2) Ethical dilemmas in AI-driven HR practices
3) Lack of longitudinal studies on well-being outcomes
4) Underrepresentation of cross-cultural perspectives

VI. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

1) Develop SHRM maturity models tailored to hospitality
2) Explore the intersection of ethical leadership and AI governance
3) Conduct cross-national studies on well-being and sustainability
4) Integrate SHRM and ethics into hospitality education frameworks

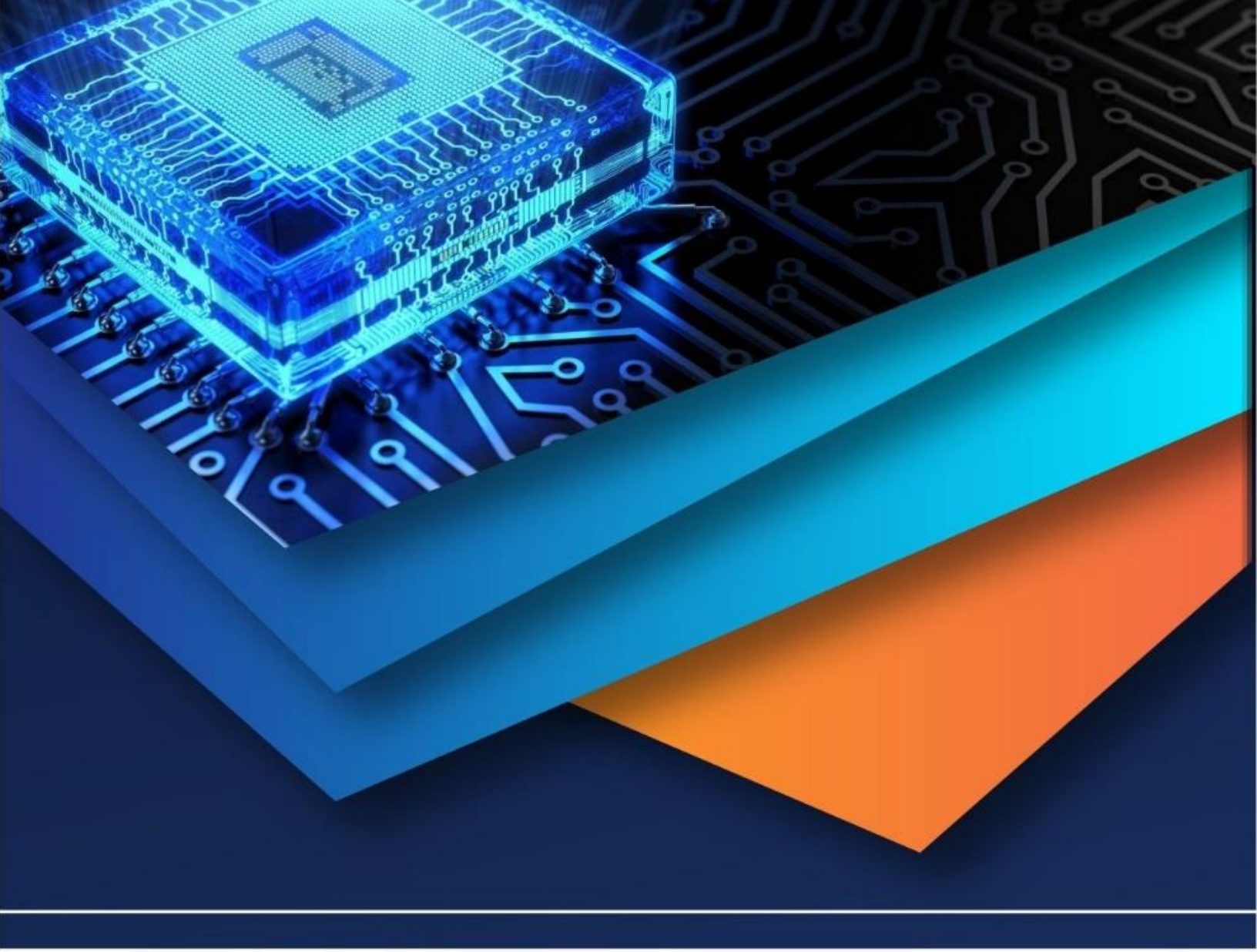
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ISSN: 2321-9653; IC Value: 45.98; SJ Impact Factor: 7.538
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VII. CONCLUSION

This review underscores the transformative potential of SHRM, workplace well-being, and ethical leadership in the hospitality industry. As the sector navigates post-pandemic recovery, climate imperatives, and workforce expectations, embedding these values into HRM is not just desirable—it is essential. By aligning people, planet, and purpose, hospitality organizations can build resilient, ethical, and high-performing cultures.

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