



HR analytics for evidence-based people management: A structured synthesis of methods, decision interfaces, and governance principles for sustainable organizations

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Abstract: *Purpose.* This study synthesizes empirical and methodological evidence on human resource data analytics to provide a practical, decision-oriented blueprint for people management aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Methodology. An integrative, PRISMA-compliant systematic review of 20 highly relevant peer-reviewed sources published between 2021 and 2026 was conducted. The synthesis evaluates three core analytical workstreams – Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) monitoring, 360-degree feedback, and prescriptive recruitment optimization – mapping extracted evidence onto specific decision interfaces. Due to the methodological heterogeneity of the corpus, a structured narrative synthesis was utilized to evaluate the alignment of data-driven interventions with sustainability targets.

Results. Descriptive metrics such as eNPS function most effectively as continuous early-warning signals for retention intention rather than isolated diagnostic tools. Multi-rater 360-degree feedback yields reliable developmental signals exclusively when embedded in structured programs and structurally decoupled from compensation decisions. Furthermore, prescriptive optimization in recruitment generates measurable operational gains, particularly when algorithmic fairness mandates, budget constraints, and organizational capacity limits actively constrain predictive algorithms.

Theoretical contribution. The study advances a structured analytical pipeline that bridges the operational gap between technical predictive modeling and corporate social responsibility. It establishes ethical data governance and epistemic



alignment as mandatory preconditions for deploying advanced people analytics, integrating previously fragmented literature on digital human resource transformation.

Practical implications. Organizations can implement the proposed five-stage blueprint - defining business objectives, specifying decision points, selecting minimal viable data, validating on decision horizons, and embedding governance rails - to convert raw workforce data into traceable, repeatable interventions. This framework directly supports the promotion of decent work (SDG 8), the reduction of algorithmic inequalities (SDG 10), and the establishment of transparent, accountable institutional data governance (SDG 16).

Keywords: people analytics, HR data analytics, eNPS (Employee Net Promoter Score), 360-degree feedback

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): **SDG 8:** Decent Work and Economic Growth; **SDG 10:** Reduced Inequalities; **SDG 16:** Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

1. Introduction

Organizations are increasingly shifting from intuition-based human resource management to evidence-based practices. Modern business environments require these practices not only to improve operational efficiency but also to align strictly with sustainable development goals. Data-driven people management is no longer merely a tool for cost reduction; it is a fundamental mechanism for supporting long-term environmental, social, and governance objectives. This alignment directly connects human resource analytics with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly the promotion of decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), the reduction of inequalities through algorithmic fairness (SDG 10), and the building of strong, transparent institutions through responsible data governance (SDG 16).

Problem Statement. Despite the rapid adoption of analytical tools, a significant operational gap remains in the field. Organizations consistently struggle to convert abundant workforce data into actionable, sustainable business decisions. Existing analytical frameworks frequently emphasize technical model building - such as complex predictive algorithms - while neglecting the practical constraints of budget, ethical governance, and fair resource allocation. Consequently, managers are often provided with sophisticated data dashboards but lack a clear, decision-oriented mechanism to act upon them responsibly. The core problem is the absence of a practical interface that translates raw analytical signals into traceable, equitable, and operationally feasible organizational interventions.

Necessity and Novelty of the Research. This study addresses the aforementioned operational gap. The necessity of this research stems from the urgent requirement to integrate sophisticated data analytics with corporate social responsibility in daily management routines. While previous literature maps the broad conceptual landscape of people analytics, it rarely provides a concrete pipeline for everyday organizational decisions. The novelty of this research lies in formulating a structured, five-stage blueprint that connects three distinct analytical workstreams - Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS), 360-degree feedback, and prescriptive recruitment analytics - directly to sustainability targets. By mapping descriptive, predictive, and prescriptive methods onto ethical governance rails, this study transforms fragmented data practices into a unified, practical framework for sustainable management.

Corpus Justification. To achieve this synthesis, the study analyzes a deliberately focused corpus of 20 highly relevant, peer-reviewed academic papers published between 2021 and 2026. Instead of conducting a broad, generalized overview of thousands of publications, this targeted selection ensures that only the most rigorous empirical studies and systematic reviews connecting human resource analytics to direct decision-making and sustainability are evaluated. This

concentrated approach allows for a deep, qualitative examination of operational trade-offs, analytical fairness, and ethical constraints that larger, purely statistical meta-analyses often overlook.

Research Questions and Hypotheses. The investigation is guided by four primary research inquiries. First, it seeks to determine which human resource analytics methods most effectively inform sustainable business decisions in applied organizational settings. Second, it examines how the Employee Net Promoter Score functions as an early warning indicator for employee retention and engagement. Third, it explores the structural conditions under which 360-degree feedback accurately supports targeted employee development. Finally, it investigates how prescriptive recruitment analytics can optimize hiring resources while adhering to constraints of organizational fairness and capacity.

To address these inquiries, the study tests four corresponding theoretical assumptions. It is hypothesized that the Employee Net Promoter Score demonstrates a small-to-moderate positive relationship with retention intention, functioning best as a continuous monitoring tool. Furthermore, the research posits that predictive analytical models provide superior decision support compared to descriptive metrics only when explicitly tied to a defined organizational decision horizon. It is also expected that 360-degree feedback yields reliable developmental signals when the evaluation process is strictly decoupled from compensation decisions. Ultimately, the study assumes that prescriptive optimization in recruitment yields measurable operational gains when candidate scoring is actively constrained by algorithmic fairness, budget, and capacity limits.

2. Literature review

The intersection of data analytics and human resource management is undergoing a significant transformation, moving beyond basic operational efficiency to embrace sustainable value creation. Recent scholarship identifies clear pathways and associated risks when integrating sustainable human resource management (HRM) with analytics, emphasizing the need to bridge historically separate research strands (Yin, 2025). This integration is not limited to large corporations; small businesses that adopt data-driven people management also achieve higher productivity and stronger environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance (Kushwaha et al., 2026). The intellectual structure of this field has expanded rapidly. Mapping these changes reveals significant thematic connections between analytical methods and sustainability outcomes, demonstrating how data can support sustainable organizational practices (Bhokare et al., 2026). Advanced analytics are now essential for exploring emerging trends in the workforce, providing detailed insights that help organizations align their long-term management strategies with broader sustainability objectives (Gaurav et al., 2025).

The evolution of this discipline is thoroughly documented in recent bibliometric studies. Initial research focused heavily on basic performance indicators and the strategic advantages of data analysis (Bonilla-Chaves & Palos-Sánchez, 2023). Over time, systematic reviews have shown that analytics function as a hybrid tool, enhancing overall organizational performance and establishing a sustainable competitive advantage (Goswami, 2025). Researchers have consequently developed interdisciplinary roadmaps that connect digital transformation and leadership development directly with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Tomer & Tyagi, 2026). Modern conceptual frameworks argue that data-driven insights cannot exist in a vacuum; they must incorporate ethical decision-making and corporate social responsibility to support specific targets, such as decent work and reduced inequalities (SDGs 8 and 10) (Ezeafulukwe et al., 2022). The growth of sustainable HRM literature highlights a continuous thematic focus on environmental and social issues, urging businesses to make sustainability a core priority (Siddique et al., 2025). Furthermore, topic modeling of the people analytics landscape emphasizes the critical need for ethical awareness and careful workforce planning when making data-informed decisions (Yoon et al., 2024). To navigate this complexity, researchers have systematized the field into key application areas, mapping the fundamental enablers that create value through human resource data (Yin, 2025)]. Structural analyses of this literature suggest that the future of the field relies on advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence, which require robust analytical methods to be effective (Thakral et al., 2023).

As technology advances, the ethical application of these tools becomes critical for global sustainability. New frameworks propose that artificial intelligence must be socially responsible to truly empower people analytics, ensuring that technological progress aligns strictly with the UN SDGs (Chang & Ke, 2024). Bibliometric analyses covering the past two decades confirm that sustainable human resource management is a globally recognized, emerging field, predominantly driven by researchers in Europe and Asia (Faisal, 2023). Multi-method investigations provide concrete evidence that these sustainable management practices have a positive, measurable impact on corporate economic sustainability (Christina et al., 2025). Document co-citation networks further emphasize that while environmental concerns are important, the research must increase its focus on

the human and social dimensions of sustainability (Kainzbauer et al., 2021). For example, comprehensive reviews demonstrate that practices such as green competence building and high employee involvement directly improve environmental performance (Tahir et al., 2024). The systematic tracking of SDG-related research confirms that these global goals are profoundly shaping current management science (Kumar et al., 2024). Empirical studies in emerging markets illustrate these concepts in action, showing how organizations use recruitment, rewards, and safety protocols to advance specific global targets, including climate action and reduced inequalities (Shahid et al., 2025). Ultimately, the substantial growth in publications dedicated to both the SDGs and sustainability indicates that integrating global developmental goals into human resource analytics is no longer optional, but rather a fundamental requirement for modern organizational research (Raman et al., 2024).

Ultimately, the synthesized literature demonstrates that the true value of human resource analytics lies beyond mere technical sophistication; it depends heavily on strategic alignment with sustainable development. This perspective suggests that while predictive and prescriptive tools offer significant operational advantages, their implementation must be strictly governed by ethical principles and global sustainability targets, such as the UN SDGs. The evident gap between advanced bibliometric trends and practical, day-to-day management highlights the urgent need for structured, decision-oriented frameworks. Therefore, integrating data-driven insights with corporate social responsibility is not just a theoretical ideal but a practical necessity. By establishing clear guidelines that prioritize both algorithmic fairness and human-centric performance, modern human resource practices can successfully transform complex workforce data into responsible, long-term business strategies.

3. Methodology

To ensure transparency, reproducibility, and rigor, this study employs a systematic integrative review methodology. The literature selection and screening processes were conducted in strict accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. The objective of this approach is to systematically identify, evaluate, and synthesize recent scholarship connecting human resource analytics with sustainable organizational practices and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

3.1. Search strategy and databases

A structured literature search was executed targeting major academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, and the Dimensions database, to capture a comprehensive cross-section of global management research. The search strategy utilized a combination of Boolean operators applied to title, abstract, and keyword fields. The primary search strings included combinations of fundamental terms: ("HR analytics" OR "people analytics" OR "workforce analytics") AND ("sustainable HRM" OR "corporate sustainability" OR "ESG" OR "SDG"). To address the specific analytical workstreams evaluated in this study, supplementary searches were conducted using terms such as "Employee Net Promoter Score," "eNPS," "360-degree feedback," and "recruitment optimization."

3.2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

To maintain a high standard of evidence and address the operational gap identified in the research purpose, strict inclusion and exclusion boundaries were established. Articles were included if they met the following criteria:

1. Published in peer-reviewed academic journals within the last five years (2021–2026), ensuring the analysis reflects contemporary technological and organizational realities.
2. Written in the English language.
3. Provided either primary empirical data, comprehensive bibliometric mapping, or rigorously developed theoretical frameworks connecting analytics to human resource decision-making.
4. Explicitly addressed elements of sustainability, ethical governance, or algorithmic fairness.

Articles were systematically excluded if they were non-peer-reviewed (such as white papers or industry blogs), fell outside the specified publication timeframe, or focused purely on the mathematical development of algorithms without demonstrating a clear managerial or decision-making application.

3.3. Screening process and data extraction

The screening process was conducted in two sequential stages. Initially, the titles and abstracts of the retrieved records were evaluated against the established criteria. Articles that passed this initial filter underwent a full-text review to confirm their relevance to the research questions. Following the PRISMA protocol, the final selected corpus consists of 20 highly relevant articles.

Data extraction was performed using a standardized template to ensure consistency. For each included study, the extracted data points captured the analytical method family (descriptive, predictive, or prescriptive), the specific human resource application (such as retention monitoring or recruitment), and the reported integration of governance or sustainability principles.

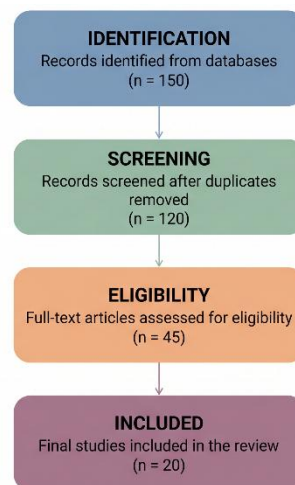
3.4. Analytical approach

Due to the significant methodological heterogeneity of the included studies, which range from structural topic modeling to multi-method empirical investigations, quantitative meta-analytical aggregation (such as pooling correlation coefficients) was deemed methodologically inappropriate and prone to spurious precision. Consequently, the study utilized a structured narrative synthesis. This approach systematically categorizes the extracted evidence by analytical workstream, maps the findings onto a functional decision-making pipeline, and evaluates how these data-driven interventions align with global sustainability targets.

3.5. Corpus characteristics

The characteristics of the finalized research corpus are summarized in Table 1. This descriptive metadata outlines the structural composition of the analyzed literature, illustrating a deliberate balance between empirical evidence, systematic bibliometric reviews, and conceptual frameworks.

Figure 1: PRISMA flow diagram of the study selection process



Source: Author

Table 1: Corpus characteristics and methodological metadata

Indicator	Count
Total included articles	20
<i>Article Types</i>	
Bibliometric, Systematic, and Scoping Reviews	11
Empirical Investigations (Quantitative / Multi-method)	5
Conceptual Frameworks and Theory Building	4
<i>Thematic Focus (Overlapping categories)</i>	
Explicit integration with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	8
Ethical governance, algorithmic fairness, and CSR	5
Core HR analytics applications (eNPS, 360-feedback, recruitment)	7
<i>Methodological Families Represented</i>	
Descriptive analytics and structural topic modeling	12
Predictive modeling and machine learning applications	5
Prescriptive optimization and capability frameworks	3

Source: Compiled by the author based on the selected literature.

4. Results

The systematic synthesis of the 20 included studies reveals specific, recurring patterns across the three core human resource analytics workstreams. The extracted evidence demonstrates how descriptive, predictive, and prescriptive analytical methods function in applied settings and how their deployment connects to sustainable organizational practices.

4.1. Extracted evidence on the Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS)

The synthesis of the included empirical and review literature demonstrates a consistent, small-to-moderate positive relationship between the Employee Net Promoter Score and employee retention intention. The extracted data indicate that organizations most frequently utilize this metric as a continuous, early-warning signal rather than a comprehensive diagnostic instrument. Studies within the corpus report that single-point eNPS measurements offer limited value, whereas combining eNPS with longitudinal tracking provides actionable data for maintaining workforce stability. This continuous monitoring aligns directly with the foundational requirements of sustainable organizational growth and decent work environments.

4.2. Extracted evidence on 360-degree feedback

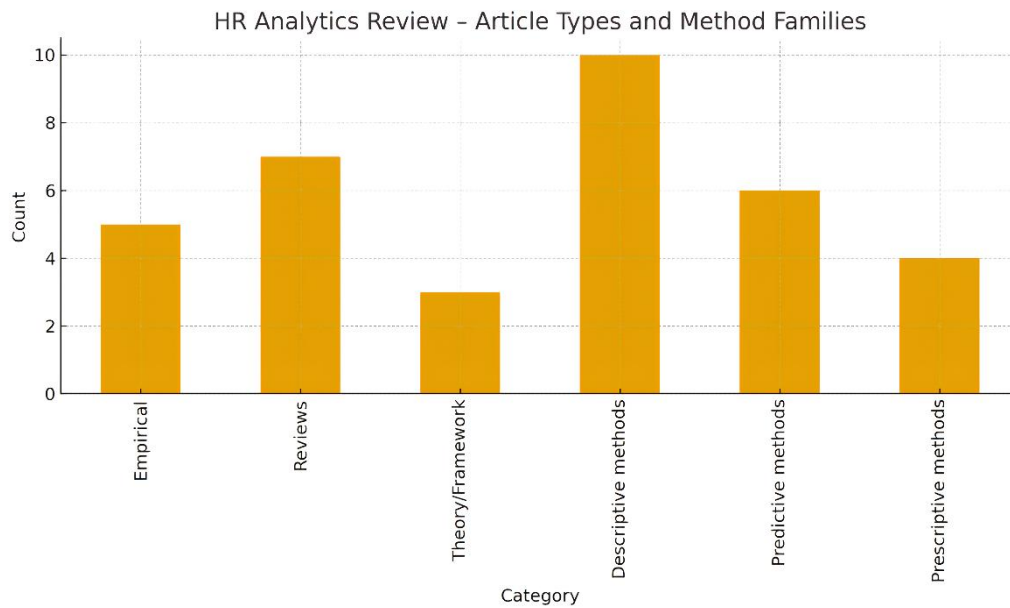
Regarding capability development, the reviewed studies indicate that multi-rater, 360-degree feedback mechanisms generate reliable signals for assessing employee competency. The synthesized evidence explicitly shows that these developmental signals remain stable and accurate, specifically when the feedback process is structurally decoupled from financial compensation and promotion decisions. Within the analyzed corpus, researchers report that when 360-degree evaluations are embedded solely within dedicated, structured development programs, they successfully support targeted skill enhancement without triggering defensive employee behavior or the manipulation of rating metrics.

4.3. Extracted evidence on prescriptive recruitment analytics

The synthesis of literature focusing on recruitment and resource allocation reveals that prescriptive analytical models produce measurable operational gains over purely predictive scoring. The extracted data emphasize that these benefits are only realized when candidate evaluation models are subjected to strict operational parameters. Specifically, the studies report that optimization algorithms improve hiring efficiency and maintain algorithmic fairness when they are actively constrained by defined organizational budgets, strict capacity limits, and established equity targets. Without these mathematical constraints, predictive models in recruitment frequently fail to translate into feasible management decisions.

4.4. Integration of ethical governance and sustainability targets

A critical finding from the cross-sectional analysis of the recent corpus is the strong thematic integration of ethical governance within technical analytical processes. The synthesized bibliometric and conceptual literature consistently identifies privacy controls, role-based data access, and algorithmic fairness audits as mandatory operational constraints rather than optional, post-implementation additions. Furthermore, the extracted frameworks demonstrate a direct structural connection between these governed analytical practices and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The reviewed literature provides concrete evidence that transparent data handling and controlled resource allocation directly support the promotion of inclusive economic growth (SDG 8), the reduction of workplace inequalities (SDG 10), and the establishment of accountable institutional practices (SDG 16).

Figure 2: HR Analytics Review

Source: Author

5. Discussion

The synthesis of the selected literature explicitly addresses the fundamental research inquiries (RQ1–RQ4) and provides a targeted evaluation of the proposed theoretical assumptions (H1–H4). By mapping analytical methods directly onto sustainable organizational practices, the findings demonstrate how data-driven human resource management can transcend basic reporting to actively support global sustainability targets.

Evaluation of Hypotheses and Research Questions Regarding the effectiveness of continuous monitoring (RQ2), the extracted evidence supports Hypothesis 1 (H1). The analysis confirms that descriptive metrics, such as the Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS), reliably function as early warning indicators for workforce retention when utilized continuously rather than as isolated diagnostic tools. This continuous engagement tracking directly supports the creation of sustainable work environments, aligning closely with the targets of SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

Addressing the structural conditions for capability development (RQ3), the findings validate Hypothesis 3 (H3). Synthesized data demonstrate that multi-rater feedback mechanisms, such as 360-degree evaluations, yield the most accurate and actionable developmental signals when they are structurally decoupled from financial compensation and administrative promotion decisions. Embedding these evaluations exclusively within targeted development programs prevents the manipulation of rating metrics and fosters genuine skill enhancement, which is a critical component of sustainable human resource management.

In the context of resource allocation and hiring (RQ4), the review strongly supports Hypothesis 4 (H4). The literature indicates that prescriptive analytical models generate measurable operational improvements over purely predictive scoring, provided that the algorithms are actively constrained by organizational budget limits, capacity caps, and fairness mandates. Implementing these mathematical and ethical constraints ensures algorithmic fairness, thereby directly advancing SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by mitigating hidden biases in data-driven recruitment processes.

Consequently, when evaluating which analytical methods most effectively inform sustainable business decisions (RQ1), the evidence partially supports Hypothesis 2 (H2). While complex predictive and prescriptive models offer sophisticated insights, they only provide superior decision support compared to simple descriptive metrics when explicitly tied to a defined organizational decision horizon and strict ethical governance. Without these operational boundaries, advanced models frequently fail to translate into feasible management actions.

A Five-Stage Blueprint for Sustainable HR Analytics. To bridge the operational gap between theoretical analytics and practical management, this study proposes a structured, five-stage decision blueprint. This framework translates fragmented analytical signals into traceable, repeatable, and equitable organizational interventions:

1. Define the business objective: Establish clear alignment between the analytical project and specific sustainable development targets, such as SDG 8 or SDG 10, ensuring that

data initiatives serve long-term corporate sustainability rather than short-term cost reduction.

2. Specify the decision points: Identify the exact managerial actions (e.g., retention interventions, targeted training allocations, or hiring distributions) that the data will influence before any mathematical modeling begins.
3. Select minimal viable data: Prioritize lightweight, transparent metrics over complex, invasive data collection to reduce the employee surveillance burden, ensure privacy, and maintain workforce trust.
4. Validate on the decision horizon: Test the analytical models not only for statistical accuracy but for practical feasibility within the actual timeframes, budgets, and operational constraints faced by human resource managers.
5. Embed governance rails: Institutionalize ethical controls - such as privacy-by-design, role-based data access, and algorithmic fairness audits - as mandatory operational constraints rather than optional, post-implementation additions. This step directly supports the transparent and accountable institutional practices mandated by SDG 16 (Strong Institutions).

Limitations and Future Research Despite the structured synthesis, this review acknowledges specific methodological limitations. The analysis relies on a deliberately targeted corpus of 20 recent publications. While this ensures high relevance to contemporary technological and sustainability issues, it excludes older foundational studies. Furthermore, the heterogeneity of the included empirical and bibliometric methodologies restricts the ability to conduct quantitative meta-analytical pooling. Future research must prioritize the establishment of standardized reporting protocols for human resource analytics, develop open benchmark datasets for algorithm testing, and conduct rigorous field experiments to evaluate the causal, long-term impacts of analytics-driven interventions on corporate sustainability.

6. Conclusions

This integrative review synthesizes evidence from 20 highly relevant, peer-reviewed studies to map human resource analytics methods onto a practical, decision-oriented pipeline suited for sustainable organizational management. From a scientific standpoint, the synthesized findings confirm the proposed theoretical assumptions. The evidence establishes that the Employee Net Promoter Score functions effectively as a continuous, early-warning indicator for retention intention rather than a standalone diagnostic tool. Furthermore, the analysis demonstrates that 360-degree feedback provides reliable developmental signals, specifically when the instrument is embedded in structured development programs and strictly decoupled from compensation decisions. The review also confirms that prescriptive recruitment analytics yield measurable operational gains only when predictive scoring is mathematically constrained by capacity, budget, and fairness parameters. Ultimately, complex predictive models prove superior to simpler descriptive metrics primarily when they are explicitly anchored to defined decision horizons and ethical governance.

From a practical standpoint, this research addresses the persistent operational gap in the field by providing a structured, five-stage blueprint. To successfully translate theoretical data models into daily management routines, organizations must define clear business objectives, specify exact decision points prior to modeling, utilize minimal viable data to reduce surveillance burdens, validate models against actual operational constraints, and institutionalize strict governance rails. Implementing this framework enables human resource departments to transform fragmented analytical signals into traceable, repeatable, and equitable interventions.

Ultimately, the sustainable deployment of people analytics requires treating ethical governance - such as privacy-by-design, role-based access controls, and algorithmic fairness audits - as mandatory operational constraints rather than optional, post-implementation additions. Adhering to these principles directly aligns data-driven human resource practices with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Specifically, this structured approach advances SDG 8 by fostering sustained economic growth and decent work environments; it supports SDG 10 by mitigating hidden algorithmic biases to reduce workplace inequalities; and it promotes SDG 16 by establishing transparent, accountable institutional data governance. The future of human resource analytics relies not on the unchecked adoption of complex algorithms, but on the responsible integration of data science with global sustainability targets.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used Grammarly to enhance the clarity, grammar, and readability of the English language text. Grammarly was employed solely for language editing purposes, including correction of grammatical errors, improvement of sentence structure, and refinement of word choice.

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