



International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Growth Evaluation.

Green human resource management: A review

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Article Info

ISSN (online): 2582-7138

Volume: 04

Issue: 06

November-December 2023

Received: 23-09-2023;

Accepted: 25-10-2023

Page No: 813-815

Abstract

The ongoing climate change crisis compels organizations to prompt their workforce continually to innovate green initiatives, aligning with the sustainable development goals advocated by the United Nations. In recent years, organizations have become more cognizant of Environmental Management as an imperative. Resources are finite, and an organization's processes are perpetual, prompting organizations to realize the adverse impact of their activities on the environment, termed as the "Greening of Management." Initiatives are being undertaken to mitigate the adverse effects of organizational activities on the environment, driven by motives such as gaining a competitive advantage, fostering goodwill, sustainable development, adopting responsible behavior towards the environment and society, among others. Consumers now demand "Green Products," and employees seek to work in a "Green Workplace," making it imperative for organizations to pay special attention to their environmental impact. Almost every department in an organization has embraced or is planning to introduce practices involving the concept of greening, such as Green accounting, Green Marketing, Green Retailing, Green Operation Management, Green Supply chain management, etc. Given that HR personnel act as the link between the organization and its employees, managing all functions related to personnel, their role is pivotal. Integrating green practices with HRM to permeate the entire organization at once is known as "GREEN HRM." This study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of GHRM as an evolving necessity for sustainable development. Rigorous examination of the literature on Green Human Resource Management, including the most recent studies, has been conducted to draw meaningful conclusions.

Keywords: Green HRM, green practices, sustainable development

Introduction

In contemporary times, preserving, protecting, and taking relevant actions to conserve the ecosystem has become mandatory for every operating business. Organizations now view "Green Human Resource Management" as an evolving area by integrating environmental concerns with human resource management (Ali *et al.*, 2020). Sustainability, which inherently applies to human resource management, is seen as an avenue for sustainable development for both the organization and its employees (Renwick *et al.*, 2012) ^[5]. Green HRM is recognized as a tool for organizations to achieve sustainable development, defined as development that endures and benefits the organization in the long run. Various definitions of Green HRM exist, emphasizing its role in creating an environmentally sensitive, resource-efficient, and socially responsible workplace and overall organization (Joyce & Vijai, 2021; Jalaja, 2018) ^[3, 6].

Green HRM Practices

1. Green Recruitment and Selection

Green recruitment and selection involve hiring individuals with behavior, knowledge, and skills related to environmental management systems in the organization.

This process can attract candidates who are environmentally conscious and possess knowledge and skills related to green practices (Mwita & Kinemo, 2018) ^[10]. Criteria for green recruitment can influence job seekers' perceptions of organizational attractiveness, with moderators such as pro-environmental attitude playing a significant role (Pham & Pallie, 2020) ^[4].

2. Green Training

Green training is an on-the-job training and further education process designed to integrate environmental management goals and objectives. Especially relevant in times of a pandemic, green training has gained significance as organizations shift towards green environmental performance. Training contributes to the knowledge and skills necessary for employees to achieve organizational goals and objectives (Obaid & Alias, 2015) ^[16]. Research indicates that firms are increasingly providing training as a strategic inclusion of green HR practices to promote sustainable business solutions (Lawal & Olawoyin, 2021) ^[14].

3. Green Performance Management

Job performance has long been a focal point in HRM studies. Green Performance Management becomes crucial in the context of Green HRM and Corporate Environmental Management. Effective performance appraisal, focusing on environmental issues and responsibilities, plays a vital role in continuous improvement in an organization's environmental outcomes (Arulrajah *et al.*, 2016; Ahmed, 2015) ^[1, 2]. Future research opportunities could explore green performance appraisal in more detail, considering aspects like communication of environmental policies, green information systems, and audits.

4. Green Employee Engagement

Green jobs, emphasizing sustainability and environmentally related opportunities, have become prevalent. Employee engagement is vital for environmental sustainability in an organization. Green employee engagement practices involve involvement in green schemes, training union representatives on environmental management, promoting the use of green transportation, and sharing information on environmental initiatives. Human Resource Management plays a primary role in implementing green practices and enhancing employee engagement levels (Welmilla & Ranasinghe, 2020). Strategies for engaging employees in going green include assigning major projects related to carbon neutrality or environmental auditing to senior operations personnel and offering flexible work hours or mobile work options (Employee Engagement and Going Green, 2021).

5. Green Pay and Reward

Green pay and reward strategies involve providing financial and non-financial rewards to attract, retain, and motivate employees to contribute to environmental goals. A combination of both financial and non-financial rewards is considered most effective. Initiatives like green travel benefits, non-financial rewards such as green recognition, and promoting the use of bicycles are examples of green pay and reward strategies (Woodard & Tang, 2018) ^[15]. Research suggests that green rewards have a small influence on sustainability of the environment. The author also suggested that firm's should give more emphasis to practices which focuses on environment sustainability (Mandago, 2018) ^[11].

In a study about reward and pay for constructing green building, the author identified rewards and compensation as a voluntary incentive and describes "rebates/fees reduction/support and eco- labelling" as different forms of reward and compensation also can be "density bonus, demonstration projects and government awards" (Saka *et. al*, 2021) ^[13].

Conclusion

It is evident from several studies that implementing Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices promotes sustainability. Practices such as Green Recruitment and Selection, Green Pay and Reward, Green Performance Management, and Green Employee Engagement, when integrated into an organization, contribute not only to the sustainability of the organization but also to environmental conservation. For organizations to operate over the long term, there must be a focus on preserving and maintaining the ecology. Green HR initiatives can be instrumental in reducing the carbon footprint and mitigating the hazardous impact of the firm's operations. Furthermore, the execution of GHRM practices has the potential to enhance profitability and provide a competitive edge over competitors. GHRM stands out as a highly researched area and a promising field for future researchers.

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