



Review Article

Green Human Resources: Strategies for a Sustainable Future

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Abstract: The analysis of the consequences of the Industrial Revolution, which affected various aspects globally including the economy, society and the environment starting with the late 18th century in England, has been in the limelight for quite some time. The exploitation of fossil fuels caused Global warming and greenhouse gases degeneration. Other than that, large scale farming practices that involve the application of heavy pesticides have worsened the situation. The environmental degradation that originated in this time period became the subject of scientific investigation in the twentieth century. Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) is a progressively management principles that embodies all import corporate social responsibility in offering Human Resources Services to the organization. GHRM transforms conventional HR functions, like, recruiting, training, evaluating performance etc, into green variants in a bid to recruit eco-friendly personnel and prepare them for achieving organizational environmental objectives. These actions assist corporations in meeting their obligations towards the external environment and in achieving their corporate social responsibility (CSR) objectives. The successful application of GHRM strategies allows organizations to reach their sustainability objectives, achieve the competitive advantage, and generate economic benefits. Employee eco-centrism and effectiveness of the management of GHRM strategies, as practice underpinned by use of information technology. Therefore, the aim of this study is to provide information about green human resources in the context of global climate change, sustainability and future trends.

Keywords: human resources; green; sustainable

Yeşil İnsan Kaynakları: Sürdürülebilir Gelecek İçin Stratejiler

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Öz: Sanayi Devrimi'nin 18. yüzyılın sonlarında İngiltere'de başlamasıyla, dünya genelinde ekonomi, toplum ve çevre alanlarında köklü değişiklikler yaşanmıştır. Fosil yakıtların yaygın kullanımı, sera gazlarının artmasına ve küresel ısınmaya yol açmıştır. Ayrıca, ormanların yok edilmesi ve tarımda kullanılan kimyasallar çevresel etkileri daha da arttırmıştır. Bu dönemde başlayan çevresel sorunlar, 20. yüzyılda bilimsel araştırmaların odak noktası haline gelmiştir. Yeşil İnsan Kaynakları Yönetimi (GHRM), çevresel hedefleri ve sürdürülebilirliği organizasyonların insan kaynakları süreçlerine entegre eden bir yönetim anlayışıdır. GHRM, çevre bilincine sahip çalışanlar istihdam etmek, onları çevre dostu uygulamalar konusunda eğitmek ve çevre hedeflerine ulaşmalarını sağlamak amacıyla işe alım, eğitim ve performans değerlendirme gibi geleneksel insan kaynakları uygulamalarını yeşil bir çerçevede yeniden şekillendirmektedir. Bu uygulamalar, şirketlerin çevresel sorumluluklarını yerine getirmelerine ve kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk (CSR) hedeflerini gerçekleştirmelerine yardımcı olmaktadır. GHRM stratejilerinin başarılı bir şekilde uygulanması, organizasyonların sürdürülebilirlik hedeflerine ulaşmalarını sağlar, rekabet avantajı kazandırır ve ekonomik faydalar sağlamaktadır. Dijitalleşme sayesinde, çevre dostu çalışanlara ulaşmak ve GHRM uygulamalarını daha verimli hale getirmek mümkündür. Bundan dolayı bu çalışmanın amacı küresel iklim değişikliği, sürdürülebilirlik ve gelecekteki eğilimler bağlamında yeşil insan kaynakları hakkında bilgi sağlamaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: insan kaynakları; yeşil; sürdürülebilir gelecek

1. Introduction

The climate system has settled into and still continues to keep that trend of the changes seen in the 4.5 billion years of time passed since the creation of the Earth, which is just about the beginning of the earth. The Industrial Revolution, a turning point that originated in England towards the end of the 18th century and eventually spread all over the world, radically altered the three pillars of economy, society, and environment. The revolution, from agricultural to industrial societies, demonstrates the production techniques transformation. The result was that large-scale production, the establishment of factories, new divisions of labor, rapid population growth, and the movement of the countryside to the city were the initial steps. In this period, technology such as mechanical machines and steam power production processes were made more efficient, as well as causing big changes in human life (Driga & Drigas, 2019).

Along with the Industrial Revolution, fossil fuels—particularly coal and later oil—were very much more abundant and used more. The release of these energy sources into the atmosphere, compared to the traditional ones, increased carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases significantly. Furthermore, the forests were destroyed to a large extent during this period; forest areas were cleared for new agricultural fields and industrial facilities. This, in turn, accelerated the global warming process by increasing the concentration of carbon in the atmosphere (Wang and Azam, 2024)

Changes in agricultural practices have also been an important driving force. The innovations in agriculture and the introduction of machines increased invasion of natural space to give rise to production. The chemicals used in fertilizers and pesticides poisoned the environment and caused the soil to be low and thus affected the ecosystem. Moreover, in addition to the use of coal-based steam locomotives, newly established transportation networks contributed considerably to global CO₂ emissions. Besides, by growing cities, the demand for more energy and natural resources happened, therefore the environmental load increased (Fuglie et al., 2024).

These environmental effects, developed by the Industrial Revolution, began to be subjects of study for scientists in the late 19th century. Nevertheless, these effects only became more explicit during the 20th century. Increasing greenhouse gas emissions and environmental degradation began to attack the problem of the mid-20th-century global warming as a great issue facing the humanity.

Green human resource management refers to the systematic, planned and professional execution of an organization's traditional human resource practices with environmental goals and objectives (Jong & Yusoff, 2016). From this perspective, it can be defined as a part of sustainable human resource management to meet the requirements related to environmental sustainability. These practices can benefit organizations that become 'green and good enough' (Martínez-del-Río et al., 2012; Elahi et al., 2020). When the concept of sustainability is analyzed.

Green human resources have come to the agenda as a result of the environmental responsibility activities carried out by businesses in Europe and America after the 2000s and have started to be studied by researchers. In the literature, there are studies that address the links, scope and functions of green human resources management with sustainability (Ahmad, 2015; Tang et al. 2018). Therefore, the aim of this study is to provide information about green human resources in the context of global climate change, sustainability and future trends.

2. Basic Components of Green Human Resources

In recent decades, green human resource management (HRM) has gained great relevance as the society is in consensus that if not alleviated, the global warming menace will cause a great threat to life. Therefore, carrying out all activities in a green way has become a demand. In recent years the concern over the issues of global warming has increased because it is based on the fact that if it is not controlled, it will most certainly affect all aspects of life. Consequently, there is a pressing importance to adopt green practices in every field. Green Human Resource Management is the transformation of functional areas of human resource management such as job description and analysis, recruitment, selection, training, performance evaluation and rewards into the context of environmental concerns centered around by community (Jabbour et al, 2010; Jabbour et al, 2016). As stated by Uslu and Kedikli (2017), green-HRM in this case means making each member aware of and sensitive to the

environmental behavior and programs every organizational member is trained on, and their participation in green and environmental programs is facilitated. Thus green-HRM while concerned with the creation of green workers is aimed more at ensuring that the company achieves its environmental targets through enhancing sustainability at this juncture.

Green HR policies are quite significant and even play a major role in recruiting. It goes without saying that the hiring process is one of the most important yet delicate phases for any organization as it defines the period's accomplishments. It comes with a perfect opportunity of picking the right individuals and fitting them into the existing organizational structures and processes. Green employment policies are very important for a number of reasons. Economically friendly policies with respect to the employment of new hires affect the very goals of the organization. Environmentally responsible employees are not only good at practicing environmental policing but they also take the companies sustainability policies in collective and active manner when they are recruited to work for such firms. Hiring awareness on environmental issues is also one key aspect in the strategies being employed by companies to reduce their carbon footprints. Moreover, this situation also helps to enhance the corporate social dimension of a company. People and societies would rather do business with companies that are respectful of the environment. This has a positive impact on the society's perception of the particular business. Enrolling professionals with environmental beliefs help in advocating for the environmental stewardship of the company as well as in advancing the enlightenment of the public on such issues. Firms that adopt green HR strategies are seen as more environmentally responsible and are thus a more preferred brand within their sectors. This helps in attracting Other socially responsible employment options and most importantly generation Z as they are the green generation. Sustainability and green strategies create opportunities for firms to differentiate themselves. In addition to other environmentally conscientious job prospects, this helps draw in Generation Z, the environmentally conscious generation. Green practices and sustainability give businesses a competitive edge.

3. Green HR Integration with Sustainability Goals

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) seeks to enhance the human resource practices in organizations towards environmental issues and in turn include such practices in the organizational culture. This encompasses green recruitment where organizations seek candidates who are committed and aware of environmental concerns and green training and development programs that provide the personnel with the knowledge and skills necessary to embrace trends and initiatives on sustainability (Malik et al., 2020; Swarnalatha, 2020). Many research works have been done on this topic. Duvnjak and Kohont, for instance, demonstrate the significance of human resource management in enhancing sustainability by noting that sustainable HRM practices do not focus purely on financial results and include social and environmental aspects as well (Duvnjak & Kohont, 2021).

GHRM practices involve more than just hiring and skill building. It extends to performance management systems that include sustainability components. This allows for the evaluation of all workers towards environmental objectives and rewarding them for green efforts (Napathorn, 2021; Hasan, 2022). Empirical evidence supports the fact that such integrated practices not only enhance their environmental performance but also inspire and motivate employees as they believe their effort is for the greater good (Swarnalatha, 2020; Chaudhary, 2019). In addition, HR professionals are key to the establishment of corporate environmental culture in any organization. They should be viewed and function as a strategic partner by lobbying for environmental issues to be incorporated in all HR systems and most importantly, promoting the idea of sustainability as an organizational ethos (Yong & Yusliza, 2016; Mehta & Chugan, 2015).

The success of GHRM practices would solely rely on the devotion of the top management and coherence of the practices with the strategy of the organization. The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory endorsed by Yusliza and others shows that GHRM practices help organizations strategize toward gaining a competitive advantage (Yusliza et al., 2017). This further strategy coherence is supported by Kramar's sustainability model that insists on the need for strategic human resource management (SHRM) policy to produce profit, social and environmental benefits at the same time (Kramar, 2022). In this case therefore, the organizations should not only embrace the GHRM practices but also have the practices incorporated into the strategic scope of the whole organization.

4. Identifying and Implementing Green HR Strategies within the Framework of Sustainability

The increasing adoption of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) strategies is appreciated as a significant blue print for sustainability in organizations. GHRM includes a set of practices that are concerned with human resource strategies and policies implemented towards the environment or sustainability. In addition to reducing the carbon footprints of the organizations, these strategies also help in retaining and engaging the employees improving organizational efficacy.

One of the core aspects of GHRM, however, is Green Orientation in different HR practices, viz., Recruitment, Training & Development, Appraisal, and Employee Relations. For example, prospective hires are encouraged to examine the so-called “green recruitment.” This is a recruitment strategy that wales to hire people who are ‘aware’ of sustainable issues in their employment (Sabapathy et al., 2023). This is crucial because sustainability principles are trained to the whole agency’s staff so that they all gravitate towards the organization’s green overall objectives (Shahriari & Hassanpoor, 2019). Refresher courses on environmental issues and green values for employees help them in continuing with such activities which in turn boosts their job satisfaction and organizational loyalty (Sarada, 2022).

GHRM practices have been proven to positively impact an organization’s sustainability by increasing employee motivation and retention. The positive relationship between green HRM and employee engagement is evidenced by studies showing that turnover rates are lower and employee morale is higher in organizations that implement green approaches (Shahriari & Hassanpoor, 2019; Westerman & Nafees, 2021). In addition, the implementation of GHRM has been associated with the creation of a green organizational culture, which is a requisite for the successful execution of sustainable strategies (Harris & Tregidga, 2012). This type of culture encourages the acquisition of employees with pro-environmental attitudes while helping in keeping those employees who are willing to work towards the sustainability of the organization (Ali et al., 2021).

Integrating HR strategies with sustainability objectives is essential to sustaining the long-term success of the organization. Previous studies indicate that the organizations that successfully manage to embed GHRM into their strategic agenda tend to be competitive, more so because their image and efficiency is improved (Dwivedi et al., 20-21; Longoni & Cagliano, 2016). For instance, those companies that implement sustainability-oriented HR strategies have been found to attract more positive responses from consumers and other stakeholders, enhancing their competitive advantage (Opatha & Arulrajah, 2014). Furthermore, GHRM practices bring economic benefits by reducing costs associated with waste management and maximization of resource use, thus promoting the sustainability of the organization (Sarada, 2022; Elziny, 2019). Traditional Human Resource Management practices have been influenced by the rapid concerns on green practices that have brought about changes in the GHRM. In order to encourage environmental sustainability within an organization, it is necessary to implement the GHRM among the employees and their activities. GHRM involves recruitment of employees and staffing which are primary functions of GHRM functions. Traditional Human Resource Management methods have been affected by the rapid concerns on vertical integration practices around GHRM debris. Human Resource Management in a Green Way and one of the newest- Global Human Resource Management is a branch of a modern organizational life.

5. Innovative Practices and Technological Developments in The Field of Green Human Resources

Training and development are part of GHRM as well. Green training programs prepare the employees with the skills and know-how to implement sustainable actions in their positions. Research shows that companies where green training is practiced do not only build the employee skills but also improve the performance of the company as a whole (Nisar et al., 2023). In addition, the building of green skills is of high importance to help create a workforce that is concerned with sustainability since such employees can actively participate in the turbocharging of sustainability measures (Napathorn, 2021). A GHRM focus means that training on environmental impacts and responsibility is of strategic value as such programs show the potential for decrease of unwanted negative impacts such as pollution, resource depletion and the likes (Sathasivam et al., 2021). GHRM systems incorporate the performance management systems which focus on the evaluation and rewarding of

employees upon their sustainability efforts if any. This includes the introduction of green performance indicators such as, inclusive and organizational targets for environmental performance (Jamil, 2023). By the use of these performance measures, the behavior encouraging towards environmental protection can be promoted to employees, which is very essential if the organization is to achieve the sustainability goals (Saeed et al., 2018). In addition, it has been noted that integrating green goals in the performance management system has a positive impact on the organizational sustainability commitment of the employees (KishanVarma, 2019).

Technology is, however, an equally important factor that accounts for the changes in GHRM practices over time. The digital technologies and applications in recruitment, training and performance management among others are expected to simplify and improve the GHRM processes. For example, a study done by Vochin et al. (2023) suggested that, the use of the internet for recruitment of individuals with an environmentally friendly culture also known as green recruitment expands the markets of green job applicants. In the same line of thought, it is possible to create an internet-based training program that teaches green skills and avoids the emissions associated with face-to-face training (Hossen et al., 2018). Hence, it can be said that the changes one meets in GHRM thanks to new practices and technologies are very important for companies that wish to improve their sustainability results. Thus, integrating green initiatives in recruitment, training and performance management will enable organizations develop a productive workforce who are also environmental champions. These initiatives are also underpinned by the rapid evaporation of the technology gap in the global arena which enables organizations to work towards their sustainability objectives.

6. Conclusions

In view of the ever-increasing effects of global warming, environmental change has greatly spurred the operations of organizations, antisocial behavior being one of them. One of the means of fulfilling these sustainability ambitions is Strategic Green Human Resource Management (GHRM). The importance of GHRM is in the fact that it helps an organization build an ethical environment by integrating the issue of the environment in the already existing human resources activities. Activities like green recruitment, training and performance management, increase the employees' environmental consciousness and at the same time encourage and motivate them to take part in the sustainability initiatives geared towards. The social objectives of the organizations include, but are not limited to, the corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices which they consider, alongside the economic sustainability practices, easier to achieve by practicing green HR policies. Indeed, the recent inclination towards HR digitalization has improved the organization's ability to attract the eco-centric employees, thereby enhancing the efficiency of GHRM. On a final note, GHRM is much needed today, more than it has ever been in the history of mankind looking at the fact that being environmentally sustainable is a competitive advantage and leads to the growth of any business in the long run. Implementation of GHRM policies will be necessary in for the sustained growth of the organization without compromising on its environmental and economic goals.

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