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# BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE: THE ROLE OF GREEN HRM IN DRIVING CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

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**Abstract:** In today's globalized world, the need for sustainability has become ever -growing social issue. Evidently, creating sustainable and environmentally- friendly business environment gives an opportunity to resolve pressuring issues of the environment and at the same time develop and implement sustainable initiatives. This article aims to achieve the following goals: to review and analyze the concept of green human resource management from the existing literature with examples of prominent companies; and to detail green human resource management practices and their applicability in organizations. This review is expected to help researchers in the field of human resource management specifically green human resource management by providing a detailed meaning of green HRM and other related concepts. Further, the paper aims at showing the significance of green HRM in contemporary organizations.

**Key words:** sustainability, green, environmentally-friendly, HR management, business practices, initiative, organization.

## INTRODUCTION

Human resources (HR) are thought to be the main component that gives an organization its competitive edge [1]. Furthermore, HR is acknowledged as a crucial resource for businesses due to its significance in cost optimization as well as in enhancing productivity and quality [2]. To encourage cooperation and coordination amongst the various parts of an organization, human resource management, or HRM, should organize into functional groups. The importance of HR capabilities for an organization's growth and sustainability is emphasized by new strategies [3]. Researchers define organizational sustainability as meeting the needs of current and future stakeholders while obviating the direct or indirect demands of stakeholders. It is also believed that since the 1990s, the idea of sustainability has evolved. Its capabilities in HRM haven't been fully identified by researchers, though [4]. By considering the "triple bottom line," which combines social, economic, and ecological factors, sustainability can help establish new perspectives and determine both theoretical and practical relationships in human resources [5]. One of the founding authors in the field of sustainable HRM is Ehnert [6]. Ehnert promoted the triple bottom line approach by arguing that sustainability principles should be applied to HRM with an emphasis on striking a balance between social, economic, and environmental goals. She proposed that HRM should take into account an organization's social responsibility and long-term employee well-being in addition to ensuring profitability. In 2014 building on Ehnert's research, Kramar [7] proposed that an organization must implement HR procedures that strike a balance between social responsibility, business performance, and environmental awareness in order to practice sustainable HRM. The significance of integrating sustainability into company culture and procedures was stressed by Kramar.

Pfeffer [8] in 2010 highlighted the significance of employee health and well-being in sustainable HRM. He emphasized that long hours, job insecurity, and stress are bad for businesses and employees alike, but traditional HR models tend to ignore this. According to Pfeffer, work-life balance and mental health initiatives need to be supported by sustainable HRM.

Five years later Cascio [9] added to the conversation on work-life balance by highlighting the importance of remote work opportunities and flexible work schedules in building a resilient and sustainable workforce. According to Cascio, businesses should actively encourage behaviors that improve well-being rather than just following the letter of the law when it comes to labor laws.

In her work, which was in 2013, Greenwood [10] examined the ethical aspects of HRM and made the case that fairness, openness, and moral leadership are the foundations of good HR practices. According to Greenwood, human resources departments are essential to maintaining fair labor standards, encouraging diversity, and guaranteeing that every employee is treated equally.

Aust et al. in 2020 [11] investigated the ways in which socially conscious practices are encouraged by ethical leadership in sustainable HRM. They maintained that HR managers have a responsibility to uphold moral principles and match their tactics with the objectives of global sustainability, which include labor rights and social equity.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

De Prins et al. [12] made a significant contribution to the field of sustainable talent development by highlighting the necessity for HRM to prioritize long-term employee growth over immediate productivity increases. They proposed that long-term organizational success is fostered by investing in employee learning, career development, and job security.

In their investigation of the subject, Macke and Genari[13] made the case that encouraging a culture of learning and development within businesses produces a workforce that is more resilient and adaptable and can handle new challenges.

The relationship between employee engagement and sustainable HRM practices was investigated by Sharma and Kiran[14] in 2013. They discovered that companies with CSR-related HR policies—like encouraging staff members to volunteer in the community—observe higher levels of employee loyalty and motivation. They maintained that motivated and empowered workers are essential to long-term viability.

Sustainable HRM fosters a participative work environment where employees actively participate in decision-making processes, particularly around sustainability goals, according to Jabbour and Santos[15]. This helps to empower employees.

Renwick et al.[16] presented one of the frameworks on green HRM that receives the most citations, highlighting the direct contribution of HR practices to environmental sustainability. Their study identified important tactics that businesses can use to lessen their environmental impact, such as promoting eco-friendly practices and setting up green workspaces.

Building on Renwick's work, Jabbour and de Sousa Jabbour[17] examined how HRM can promote environmental stewardship through strategies like eco-friendly hiring, environmental awareness training, and performance management programs that incentivize sustainable projects.

Mariappanadar[18] underlined the significance of measuring and tracking sustainability outcomes in HRM while focusing on the social and psychological costs of conventional HR methods. He popularized the term "harm of HRM practices," which describes the detrimental effects that unsustainable HR policies can have on workers' well-being.

In instance, by including measures on employee happiness, environmental impact, and social performance into HR scorecards and performance management systems, Bamberger et al.[19] created frameworks to quantify sustainable HRM effectiveness.

There is a general agreement in the literature on sustainable HRM that HR strategies need to embrace the principles of social, environmental, and economic sustainability in addition to traditional profit-driven approaches. Scholars like Jabbour (2016) and Renwick et al. have developed the idea of green HRM, while Ehnert (2009) and Kramar have established the foundation for this discipline. The studies mentioned above highlight the significance of several factors in promoting sustainable organizational success, including environmental stewardship, long-term development, ethical leadership, employee well-being, and CSR integration.

AMO theory is the basis for this investigation. Ability, Motivation, and Opportunity are referred to as AMO. The theory states that an employee's ability, motivation, and access to performance opportunities all affect their performance. This suggests that when workers are well-motivated, possess the necessary knowledge and skills, and are given opportunities to put those skills to use, the likelihood of a firm performing better increases. The ability, motivation, and opportunity (AMO) framework (Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg & Kalleberg, 2000; Boxall & Purcell, 2003) [20] has gained widespread acceptance since its introduction in 2000 as a means of explaining the relationship between performance and human resources management (Marin-Garcia & Tomas, 2016) [21].

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The archival technique was used in the study to accomplish the objectives mentioned above. The approach consisted of reading publications on green HRM that explained terminology, the applicability of five chosen GHRM practices, and the importance of GHRM in modern organizations. The approach was chosen to make it possible to examine the body of literature already in existence and develop a deeper comprehension of green HRM principles and practices. Pham, and Phan (2019); Peerzdah, Mufti, and Nazir (2018); Renwick, Redman, and Maguire (2008) employed this approach in comparable investigations, and it allowed for a thorough examination of green HRM research.

The published articles that form part of this analysis were released between 2005 and 2019. To capture current knowledge and developments in the subject of Green HRM, the study included recently published articles.

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

There are number of sustainable HR management practices around the globe. The most five prominent and effective ones are named as green recruitment and selection, green job analysis and design, green training and development, green performance management and green reward management.

### **Green recruitment and selection**

Recruiting is viewed as the organization's entry point. It provides an organization with the chance to draw in a pool of applicants so that the best ones can be chosen to join. According to Kiruthigaa and Viswanathan[22], green recruitment is a minimally environmentally impactful, paperless recruitment process. Online channels such as email, online application forms, and the Global Talent Pool are used to solicit applications. To minimize any environmental impact associated with travel, interviews are performed over the phone or via video whenever feasible. From this perspective, organizations are trying whatever they can to ensure that proper people are attracted but the process remains to be as environmentally pleasant as feasible. According to Diana[23], e-recruiting lowers the energy consumption and pollutants linked to the production, shipping, and recycling of paper goods. Energy-saving measures include process automation for handling, filing, mailing, storing, and reporting operations. Reducing paperwork for onboarding, advertising, and resumes results in immediate cost savings. Several companies globally have embraced **green recruitment and selection processes** as part of their broader commitment to sustainability. These practices involve hiring individuals who align with the company's environmental values and implementing processes that reduce the environmental impact of recruitment itself. Here are some notable companies known for adopting green recruitment and selection practices:

#### IKEA

**Sustainability Commitment:** IKEA focuses heavily on reducing its environmental impact across all aspects of its operations, from sourcing materials to its product lifecycle.

**Green Recruitment:** IKEA's recruitment process favors candidates with a strong environmental ethic, and they are known to assess candidates based on their alignment with the company's sustainability mission. IKEA also uses digital recruitment methods to minimize paper usage and travel [24].

#### Google

**Sustainability Commitment:** Google has made strong environmental commitments through its data center energy efficiency initiatives, carbon neutrality, and investment in renewable energy.

**Green Recruitment:** Google incorporates sustainability into its hiring processes, particularly when recruiting for roles in its sustainability team and operations related to green data centers. Google also uses digital tools to reduce the environmental impact of its recruitment process, cutting down on the need for printed materials and excessive travel for interviews [25].

#### Siemens

**Sustainability Commitment:** Siemens, a global leader in energy-efficient technologies, is committed to reducing its environmental impact and driving innovation in sustainability.

**Green Recruitment:** Siemens integrates sustainability criteria into its recruitment and selection process by targeting candidates who are passionate about innovation in sustainable technologies. The company uses virtual recruitment methods to reduce carbon footprints associated with travel [26].

#### Tesla

**Sustainability Commitment:** Tesla is committed to driving the global transition to sustainable energy with its electric vehicles and renewable energy products.

**Green Recruitment:** Tesla actively seeks candidates who align with its mission to accelerate the advent of sustainable transport and energy. The company evaluates applicants based on their commitment to sustainability and environmental impact reduction [27].

Organizations are expected to make sure that, following their recruitment of green candidates, the appropriate green applicants are also chosen in a green manner. Green selection allows for the greatest amount of paperless process in the selection, such as behavioral observation, interviews, and presentations that require less paper. Additionally, consideration may be given to candidates who have a strong desire to maintain the office's natural or green surroundings or who are more ecologically conscious and friendly [28].

This means that whatever exam is used to evaluate job prospects, it should be created so that, among other things, individuals who are motivated to protect the environment and have understanding of it will be more likely to be chosen.

### **Green job analysis and design**

Information on the abilities, skills, and knowledge a person needs to perform a specific job well is gathered as part of the job analysis process [29]. When creating a job, choices are made ahead of time on the tasks, responsibilities, resources required, requirements for human resources, and inter-organizational working relationships [30]. Job descriptions are one of the results of job analysis and design. A job description serves as an official framework for describing a position; it may include details about the duties, responsibilities, capabilities, general objectives, competencies, and knowledge that the organization is looking for [31].

Employers can, therefore, employ a process of job analysis and design to make sure that workers are not only formally required to perform their jobs in an environmentally friendly manner, but also that their knowledge of environmental issues is one of the prerequisites for carrying out a specific job effectively and efficiently. At least one task pertaining to environmental protection is included in every job description, as noted by Arulrajah, Opatha, and Nawaratne[32] in certain organizations. Environmental obligations are also included explicitly whenever and wherever they are relevant. In this sense, it is simpler for businesses to implement green practices and hold staff members responsible for them. According to AMO theory, in order for workers to perform effectively, they must be given the chance to do so, which calls for the creation of a supportive work environment. Marin-Garcia and Tomas contend that opportunity considers both the workplace and individual attributes in support of this viewpoint. The analysis and design of occupations to support the accomplishment of organizational goals, including green goals, is referred to as the work environment.

Globally, number of companies embraced green job analysis and design practices as an initial part of their sustainable strategy. Here the list of those companies:

#### Google

**Green Job Analysis:** Google conducts job analysis to ensure roles in its sustainability and operations departments align with environmental objectives. This includes roles dedicated to improving energy efficiency in data centers, reducing water consumption, and expanding renewable energy use across its global operations.

**Green Job Design:** Google has designed jobs with a strong focus on sustainability, such as environmental engineers and energy analysts, who work to reduce the company's carbon footprint. These roles focus on innovation and resource efficiency, aligning with the company's goal of being carbon neutral [33].

#### Unilever

**Green Job Analysis:** Unilever emphasizes sustainability in its job analysis, particularly for roles tied to its *Sustainable Living Plan*. Unilever systematically analyzes roles to integrate sustainability competencies, ensuring that environmental impact is a key performance metric across job functions.

**Green Job Design:** The company designs jobs, especially in product development, supply chain management, and procurement, with sustainability objectives. For example, employees working in sourcing are tasked with ensuring the use of sustainable raw materials and reducing environmental impacts across the supply chain [34].

#### Siemens

**Green Job Analysis:** Siemens regularly analyzes roles within its green technology divisions, ensuring that job functions align with sustainability goals. This includes roles focused on developing renewable energy technologies and improving energy efficiency in industrial operations.

**Green Job Design:** Siemens has designed roles for environmental engineers, energy efficiency experts, and sustainability consultants. These jobs are focused on developing and implementing green technologies, such as smart grids and renewable energy solutions, contributing to Siemens' vision of sustainable infrastructure [35].

#### Green training and development

To succeed in this demanding and evolving world, an organization must prioritize training and development. Although employee performance and training and development are essentially directly associated, an organization ultimately benefits from both [36]. Green training and development offers staff members the chance to participate in environmental problem-solving while also teaching them the importance of environmental management and energy-efficient and waste-reduction techniques [37]. Green training and development calls for an environmentally friendly method in addition to providing management and staff with information and skills on topics pertaining to environmental sustainability. According to Hosain[38], in order to minimize paper usage, training supervisors should rely more on online case studies and course materials than on printed books, pamphlets, and handouts.

Training on environmental issues has two major goals. The company's environmental policies should be appropriately explained to the workforce in the first place. Next, training should be provided to the workforce in order to modify their daily actions and foster a more stable and intentional relationship with the environment. Green Employees are made aware of the importance and various aspects of environmental management through training and development initiatives. It facilitates their adoption of various conservation strategies, such as internal waste management. Additionally, it honed an employee's abilities to handle various environmental concerns [39]. According to Teixeira et al., cited in Masri[40], green training is regarded as one of the most crucial instruments for building human resources and easing the transition to a more sustainable society.

Unilever

**Green Training Focus:** Unilever's *Sustainable Living Plan* has driven the company to incorporate sustainability into its employee training programs across the globe. The company provides training on sustainable sourcing, eco-friendly product design, and waste reduction across its supply chain.

**How:** Unilever has integrated sustainability into its leadership development programs, ensuring that managers are trained to make decisions that balance environmental, social, and financial outcomes. Employees also receive ongoing training on energy efficiency and reducing waste in their operations, helping Unilever reach its goal of halving the environmental footprint of its products.

IKEA

**Green Training Focus:** IKEA emphasizes sustainability in its employee training programs, particularly in its efforts to reduce waste and encourage sustainable sourcing.

**How:** IKEA offers training sessions focused on sustainability best practices, such as energy-saving strategies, recycling, and responsible product sourcing. This training extends to store-level employees, who are taught to minimize waste, optimize energy use, and encourage customers to adopt environmentally friendly habits. IKEA also has a *Sustainability Leadership Program*, designed to equip leaders with the knowledge and tools to integrate sustainability into everyday business decisions.

Google

**Green Training Focus:** Google emphasizes sustainability in both its operations and its workforce, particularly in areas related to energy use and environmental innovation.

**How:** Google provides sustainability training for employees, especially those in data centers and offices, focusing on energy efficiency, water conservation, and waste reduction. Google's *Green Team* initiative engages employees in sustainability efforts and offers workshops and learning programs on reducing their carbon footprint, both in the workplace and at home. Employees are encouraged to participate in green innovation projects, such as designing energy-efficient buildings or reducing emissions from cloud operations.

Green performance management

According to Armstrong, performance management is a methodical process that enhances individual and team performance within an organization. Performance management typically entails evaluating teams and individuals based on predetermined standards and objectives. According to Opatha and Arulrajah[41], all organizations are required to carry out corporate environmental management, which means that they have environmental obligations to meet or environmental goals to attain. According to Mehta and Chugan[42], green performance management entails tying performance evaluation to environmentally friendly objectives and duties listed in the job description.

Setting and enforcing the effective achievement of green goals for teams and individual employees is one way that organizations may put green performance management into reality. It is possible to assess employees and teams progress toward these goals on a regular basis. By ensuring that employees have green job descriptions, green job analysis and design can contribute to the ease of green performance management. From there, each employee's performance on his or her specific job can be evaluated using green roles and responsibilities. Green targets for the key performance areas (KPA) should be incorporated into performance management systems, according to Deshwal. This can be converted into green behavior indicators and green performance standards, which should be used as benchmarks for evaluating the work of employees at all levels.

Thus, green performance management is implied to be a methodical process by which a company assigns green goals for teams and individual workers to accomplish, evaluates how these goals are accomplished on a regular basis, and uses a variety of management techniques to support teams and workers in achieving the goals effectively and efficiently.

Green performance management is a technique for improving individual, group, and organizational performance toward green goals because the primary goal of performance management as a human resource management approach is to support employee and organizational performance. The use of HR practices targeted at improving employee performance can be seen as a composition of three aspects, according to AMO theory: skill, motivation, and opportunity-enhancing HR practices. This indicates that one of the key

components of AMO theory is green performance management. Here are some companies embracing green performance management, along with how they implement it:

#### Patagonia

**How:** Patagonia, known for its environmental activism, aligns employee performance with the company's sustainability values. Employees are assessed on their involvement in environmental initiatives, such as promoting product recycling, reducing the carbon footprint of operations, and participating in Patagonia's environmental campaigns. Sustainability performance is a significant part of their overall appraisal process.

**Process:** Patagonia evaluates employees based on environmental KPIs, such as reducing waste in production, engaging in environmental activism, and supporting the company's mission of reducing ecological impact [43].

#### Nestlé

**How:** Nestlé incorporates sustainability into its employee performance management system, particularly in supply chain, procurement, and manufacturing roles. Employees are evaluated based on their success in meeting the company's environmental targets, such as reducing water usage, minimizing packaging waste, and sourcing sustainably. Employees at all levels are responsible for contributing to Nestlé's broader sustainability goals.

**Process:** Sustainability metrics are included in annual reviews, with specific targets for water conservation, energy efficiency, and waste reduction. Employees are also evaluated on their participation in sustainability initiatives across the supply chain [44].

#### Green reward management

The conventional wisdom holds that an effective incentive program can encourage staff members to meet acceptable performance standards, which include environmental performance. An organization's commitment to environmental sustainability management can be evaluated quite well by looking at its reward structure [45]. By providing employees with a benefits package that recognizes and compensates them for their green performance, employers can incorporate the achievement of specific environmental objectives into their compensation plans. Green reward management plays a major role in inspiring managers and non-managerial staff to support corporate environmental management activities. Certain organizations offer financial rewards to their staff, such as cash bonuses, incentives, or prizes, for their excellent environmental performance.

In several other organizations, staff members who perform well in the environmental department receive non-monetary rewards (prizes, trophies, special recognition, honors, etc.). Thus, the term "green reward management" describes an organized approach to developing and putting into practice plans and guidelines for rewarding workers and groups who successfully advance workplace environmental management activities [46]. One of the key elements of motivation that the AMO theory supports is reward management. According to the argument, organizations have a duty to inspire people for greater performance since they are more inclined to perform better. According to this perspective, the administration of green rewards plays a critical role in fostering a green culture among employees. As such, employees who exhibit environmentally conscious behavior should be rewarded with both monetary and non-monetary incentives for successfully achieving green organizational objectives.

Employers that are environmentally conscious are highly sought after, and any prospective employee would want to work for one in order to gain experience and enhance their resume [47]. This suggests that companies using Green HRM have an advantage over others when it comes to hiring qualified staff. The likelihood that companies will find more attractive personnel rises with the size of the candidate pool. In comparison to their non-sustainable rivals, many green businesses these days tout low turnover rates. According to this perspective, using green HRM techniques can help with staff retention. Since companies lose money due to staff turnover, implementing green HRM practices might be seen as one solution to the issue. According to Tiwal & Bangwal, businesses that are ignorant of the green concept, green practices, and green policies risk losing creative or talented workers to organizations that have adopted green practices, built an eco-friendly brand, or provide socially conscious incentives, because green HRM methods prioritize minimizing waste and reserving and preserving natural resources, they contribute to the development of sustainability. Accordingly, there is a significant link between environmental sustainability, green human resource management, and corporate social responsibility (CSR). By implementing Green HRM, companies can fulfill their corporate social responsibility obligations by protecting the environment from environmental damage in addition to supplying completed goods and services. According to Sharma, companies that prioritize corporate social responsibility tend to have more favorable interactions with legislators and government officials. On the other hand, companies that exhibit a careless attitude towards social responsibility frequently have to defend against several investigations and reviews, which are frequently initiated by public service organizations. From a broad standpoint, different stakeholders believe it is more suitable to work for or associate with socially conscious organizations.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

When the actions mentioned above are consistent and in line with a broader business and HRM strategy that supports the environment, they strengthen one another and create synergy. Making the most of company cultures, non-financial rewards, teamwork, training, and the evaluation of environmental goals are all critical to long-term success in corporate environmental sustainability. Because of interdependence and reinforcement, the benefits of implementing each practice increase with the implementation of the others.

Top management and staff members share an environmental vision that is spread through the cogent and complementary application of green HRM practices. Employee coordination and a feeling of shared purpose are facilitated by the presence of a shared vision, mental models, and meanings. This shared commitment to the environment encourages group actions that align with the strategic pro-environmental objectives of the company. Green HRM approaches effectively communicate to staff members the importance of environmental sustainability.

On the other hand, inconsistent practices could be detrimental to one another. Because “organizations are not using the full range of green HRM practices, and this may limit their effectiveness in efforts to improve Environmental Management,” creating a cogent system of green HRM practices is difficult and expensive. Thus, an integrated and integrative strategy is required when dealing with green HRM. It is especially crucial to carefully plan and execute a system of green HRM practices that takes into account all of the dimensions, functions, and practices.

The study's conclusions suggest the following actions: First and foremost, in order to increase knowledge and comprehension of Green HRM, additional training courses must be planned and given to managerial and non-managerial personnel of diverse organizations. In order to guarantee that more green graduates are created in these institutions, education institutions must incorporate Green HRM into their curricula. Additionally, further study in the field of green human resource management is needed to produce more fact-based conclusions that would clarify the fundamentals of green HRM in modern organizations.

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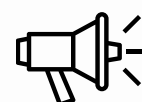
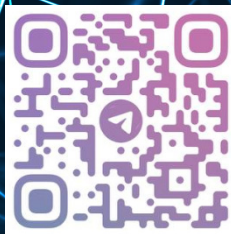
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