

Green Human Resource Management and Organizational Environmental Sustainability During Covid-19 Pandemic: A Conceptual Framework

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ABSTRACT

This paper concentrate on underlying strategies for improving environmental sustainability, creating awareness among human resource managers and employees about Green Human Resource Management (GHRM), the green movement, and the use of natural resources to help organizations foster sustainable growth and safeguard the health and safety of both staff and customers. The current COVID-19 pandemic has significantly altered how people operate, and employees execute their organization roles. Through Green Human Resource Management strategies in the current COVID-19 pandemic, organizations can balance the economic, social, and environmental goals of organizations directly contributing to improving global recovery from the pandemic. Information, results, and discussion in this study are based on literature reviews obtained through online publications. This study shows that the functions and practices of GHRM positively impact environmental sustainability. During the COVID-19 pandemic, employers are putting immense efforts towards achieving the level of employee's health and wellbeing. Nonetheless, the study found that GHRM remains relatively new in organizations due to the lack of documented evidence supporting its functions and practices. The study recommends that public organizations implement robust policies and strategies that integrate GHRM into their strategic plans along with adequate management-employee involvement and commitment.

Keywords: *Green HRM Concept, Green HRM practices, Green HRM Challenges, Environmental Sustainability, Covid 19.*

1. INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 pandemic has significantly led to changes in how organization staff operates, harnessing teleworking strategies and significant workday flexibility. In society and organizations, environmental sustainability has become essential. Natural disasters, climate change, and the depletion of natural resources have become troubling [1]. As modern organizations' management focuses on harnessing their employees' health and wellbeing, achieving increased environmental sustainability is essential. According to [2], this entails ensuring the pressure from the governments, stakeholders, customers, employees, and competitors. Due to

excessive tree cutting, fossil fuel burning, and carbon monoxide emissions caused by an organization, the environment is in a desperate state right now. AGENDA 2030 is a global campaign that encourages world leaders, notably those in developing countries, to set goals to reduce pollution and enhance the environment [3].

Sustainability as a concept has been highly influential on organizational prosperity around the world. A concept that gained its prominence at the Earth Summit of 1992 and its subsequent Johannesburg Declaration of 2002, the concept is now recognized as the international development agenda [4]-[7]. Global summits and declarations supported national sustainable development policies

[8]-[10]. The link of this concept with the COVID-19 pandemic is that the best approach in which organizations manage their HR function is similarly able to improve environmental sustainability. Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) is embedded in providing a balance between HRM policies, activities, and practices with environmental sustainability management [11],[12]. GHRM contains environmentally-friendly human resource practices and policies undertaken by organizations to obtain its fundamental objectives and goals by mitigating negative impacts of the environment emerging from the actions and policies by the organizations [13], [14]. Embracing environmentally friendly human resources requires organizations to commit to environmental sustainability by focusing on green practices like reducing waste management, carbon footprint, recycling, producing and using green products [15], [16].

GHRM is a system, practice, and policy that aims to make employees in an organization more environmentally friendly, business-wise, and individual-oriented, as well as contributing to the welfare of society and the environment [17]. A firm's alignment to environmental protection is determined through GHRM's specific practices. It also focuses on the fragility of the ecosystem and the environmental effects of the organization's economic activities [18]. As well as improving the overall performance of the organization, Green HRM also contributes to its external and internal stakeholders' wellbeing [19].

GHRM is a source of competitive advantage by creating a sustainability culture and managing sustainability initiatives [20]. Organizations can reach environmental strategies and goals incorporating organizational learning, performance evaluations, job positions, training, recruitment, teamwork, selection, and organizational culture to environmental issues [21]. GHRM pulls attention from practitioners and academicians all over the world. It refers to practices in organizations that focus on the human side of environmental management to promote environmental performance [22]. [23] stated that despite earning a position in the literature and its increased application in many organizations as a remedy for environmental degradation, GHRM is still a comparatively new phenomenon in many countries, particularly in organizations [21]. Based on this background information, this conference paper concentrate on underlying strategies for creating awareness, enhancing environmental sustainability to HR managers and staff about GHRM, utilization of natural resources, and the green movement to help organizations retain and maintain the natural

environment for sustainable growth and protection staff and customers' health and safety.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Environmental Sustainability

Adopting the definition by [24], environmental sustainability is the responsibility of conserving natural resources and protecting global ecosystems. This is for supporting the health and wellbeing of the employees currently and as a future best practice. It is now worldwide essentially recognizing that staff in any firm can improve environmental sustainability [25]. Also, in affirming this, [26] note that the mitigation of environmental pollution and climate change requires a substantial commitment and inclusion of all organizations in different sectors. This mitigation varies based on the organization's characteristics that influence environmental sustainability, including implementation of environmental practices, drivers, barriers, and associated performance implications. Pro-environmental initiatives in firms are growing daily due to the lousy case. The climate variates the scarcity of resources and the destruction of the environment [27] irreversibly. Environment safeguard is now a stand-out trend all around the world. Many firms are forced to perform environmental protection procedures and policies as their concern of every community [28].

Sustainable environments improve environmental accountability and quality to avert the destruction and depletion of the environment. It includes three stages; in the first stage, the firm replies to environmental policies and regulations to affect its framework. In the second stage, the firm put condensation to protect the environment by reducing pollution and taking other related measures. In the third stage, environmental sustainability is ensured by activities, proactive and voluntary [29].

Different studies have focused on evaluating sustainable environment management in the current COVID-19 pandemic. From a direct point of view, [30] noted that the prevalence of environmental issues owing to an increase in anthropogenic activities leads to the COVID-19 pandemic. The study similarly evidenced that the increased COVID-19 pandemic is a consequence of the increased global population and overexploitation of natural environments. From an indirect context, [31] highlighted the existing United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) comprised of 17 agendas focusing on 169 targets and used in all countries and

regions globally. In this regard, [32] notes that the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected the achievement of the SDGs. As a result, it has increased the approach towards developing appropriate policy choices and investments in government, social protection, green economy, and digitization.

2.2 Green HRM Concept

In recent years, the importance of Green HRM in organizations has grown manifold as environmental management practices gain in popularity. The meaning of Green HRM can best be explained by its emphasis on eco-friendly human resource practices. These practices can help organizations reduce their carbon footprints. These may contain less resource wastage, improved work attitudes, reduced costs, and improved employee performance. HRM practices and policies focused on making an organization more environmentally friendly are considered Green HRM [33], [34]. HRM is the practice of ensuring organizational resources are utilized effectively and efficiently [35], [36], [37]. Also, GHRM involves the systematic, planned alignment of typical HRM practices with the organization's environmental goals [12].

[38] Noted that the Green HRM concept incorporates an environment-friendly HR commencement and initiatives for sustainable use of resources, leading to increased efficiency, limited wastages, and improvement in job-related attitudes. This green concept improves work/private life, reduces costs, improves employee performance and retention. Besides that, Green HRM practices can reduce the employee's carbon footprints. By establishing a conceptual framework of the Green HRM concept, [39] identify the process as the best practice in applying relevant policies in HRM, practices, and systems in an entity that ensures green employees for individual gain, teams, societies, natural environment, and organizations. This result is affirmed by [40], which define HRM policies and practices for individuals, teams, societies, natural environments, and organizations. In addition, this is affirmed in [39] evidenced that a launch of green HRM policies and investment in green technology mushroom amongst various business professionals, banking sectors, hospitals, and academic institutions. Owing to the complexities linked with the issue of environmental sustainability, this has lead to an increase in the scope of concerns by corporate, governments/semi-governments, and consumers. As evidence, the HRM activities reinforce and are

feasible by driving environmental management initiatives.

2.3 Green HRM Practices

According to [41], HRM focuses on selecting, rewarding, and training employees for their positive attitudes and behavior toward protecting the environment to generate an environmental-friendly culture. The scope and nature of GHRM are based on extending HRM practices to green concerns. These include Green Performance Management (GPM), Green Recruitment and Selection (GRS), Green Training and Development (GTD), Green Employees Participation and Engagement (GEPE), Green Human Resource Planning (GHRP), Green Reward Management (GRM), etc. [34]. [42] suggests that GHRM is the best paradigm for fixing environmental problems within organizations. GHRM is depicted by [43] as the alignment of HRM practices such as human resource planning, performance management, training, recruitment and selection, rewards, and compensation to the overall organizational green management mission and goals. This result is supported by [44] that highlighted the need for green human resource management in taking part in the critical function in organizations, which entails their assumption, management philosophy, HR policies and practices, training the employees, and implementation of legislation on environment safety.

2.3.1 Green Recruitment and Selection

Green recruitment and selection involve attracting and hiring candidates who conform to an organization's environmental management systems regarding knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors [45]. It is challenging to find talented, creative, and innovative candidates, increase recruitment possibilities and hire quality employees [17]. To guarantee workplace environmental sustainability, firms must design greenways of hiring and attracting talented staff. This endeavor, therefore, requires that recruitment and selection processes take into account the long-term demand of integrating firm environment culture with GRS processes. Eventually, the job description should consider health and safety tasks and other related functions impacting the environment. In addition, organizations' green goals should be tailored to match their potential candidates' compatibility. A comprehensive green induction program for selected candidates is part of the recruitment process, which includes environmental sustainability information and commitment to the organization's green goals. Using "green" methods

for recruitment, such as online means and limited paper usage during recruitment, and measuring green attitudes during selection, are practices that are taken into account when recruiting and selecting green candidates [46]. Individual's green aptitudes are vital for pro-environmental performance [47]. Therefore, it is worth considering individuals who value the environment and follow basic eco-friendly activities such as recycling, carpooling, and energy conservation. Conversely, candidates who care about the environment will be attracted to green organizations branded a "green employer" [48].

2.3.2 Green Performance Management

To maintain environmental sustainability, green audits, information systems, and performance management must be established. GPM refers to issues related to organizational policies and environmental management [17]. Organizations can only sustain the environment if performance evaluation is directly linked to green tasks, goals, and job descriptions [17], [37]. To integrate environmental management concerns with green tasks, the staff and management must be empowered, engaged, and committed to a green environment. Engagement and empowerment begin when senior leaders commit to targets, environmental management, performance measures, and activities. Furthermore, managers' commitment to performance appraisals is significant when their dedication and responsiveness align with environmental management activities. Based on research done by [49] managers can encourage as much employee engagement in green management as possible when they give employees the freedom to share their ideas at the performance appraisal meeting.

2.3.3 Green Training and Development

Environmental sustainability contains the development of robust systems and policies having employee training at all levels of the organization. T&D programs for employees should deliberately include environmental management aspects. During a Training Needs Analysis, the human resource department should consider what skills and knowledge gap an employee with an environmental focus has to make an informed decision regarding their environmental training. As part of employee training and development programs, employees should attend seminars and workshops on environmental management to change their protection and behavior in the environment [50]. Employee training programs should also cover

environmental issues such as safety, energy, waste management, and recycling. Additionally, training and development extend more commitment to environmental management when grown to newly employed employees in the form of induction. During the induction program, trainees should be informed of the policies and procedures relating to green management in advance.

Good environmental performance can be achieved through making environmental awareness among staff at all levels. As a result, it is essential to provide environmental education to change employees' behavior and attitude. [35], [51] emphasized providing such training to employees that can encourage recycling and waste management habits among them. Furthermore, training employees to produce an energy-efficiency analysis of workstations, executing job rotation to develop future green managers, and developing their green-related skills might be considered effective green training and development practices [17].

2.3.4 Green Rewards and Compensation

Environmental sustainability can only be realized when integrated with GHRM practices; it requires motivated and committed employees. Organizations must take compensation and reward as critical elements for reinforcing their employees' positive green attitudes and behaviors before anything else. According to [33], the best way to achieve green behavior is by instituting a compensation package dynamically based on an employee's behavior, especially for those who exhibit environmental-friendly behavior. In addition, [36] argues that compensation packages should also be tailored to benefit employees with green skill achievement and acquisition. Tailoring packages to reward green skill acquisition; using non-monetary and monetary-based environmental management rewards, such as bonuses, gifts, cash premiums, and sabbaticals; linking green suggestion projects to reward systems are some of the practices covered under the GRC system [52]. Reducing carbon footprints and green rewarding attitudes in the workplace should be emphasized. This effort can be supposed as a possible tool for supporting environmental activities in firms [15].

2.3.5 Green Employee Relations

It is the philosophy of employee relations to involve employees in the decision functions and processes of the organization. The involvement and

participation of employees in green initiatives result in better green management by aligning staff capabilities, motivation, and goals with green management practices. According to [53], involving employees improves environmental management systems, such as increasing resource efficiency and reducing waste in the organization. A positive culture of employee engagement in environmental management will help companies succeed with environmental initiatives. Environmental management initiatives are not solely the responsibility of top management but are a shared commitment to the organization's management, customers, and staff.

2.4 GHRM Practices and Environmental Sustainability

According to [54], GHRM practices are when an organization adopts different mechanisms, methods, plans, and policies for the sustainability of the environment. It's the role and responsibility of HR to extend awareness and training to the staff regarding environmental sustainability. There are several methods by which HR policies and practices can be combined, resulting in better involvement of staff, minimization of cost, and maximize efficiencies in performances [55].

Several studies in the field of research were concentrating on GHRM practices and green management [15], [49], [56]-[59]. This research also emphasized the relation between GHRM such as Green Recruitment and Selection, Green Training and Development, Green Performance Management, and positive environmental sustainability performance. Further, researchers believe that GHRM practices are an effective positive tool for developing green human capital to deliver green competitive advantage and sustainable performance. Jose [60] confirmed that the aforementioned GHRM practices are more suitable and may guarantee that green issues can be included in people's daily routines.

[61] stated that authorization, training, and employee commitment for the pro-environmental activities are directly related to the sustainability of the environment and perform the role of mediator. According to the definition of the World Commission on Environment and Development, sustainable development means to fulfill the present need without sacrificing the needs of the future generation [62].

2.5 Green HRM Practices and Environmental Sustainability in Current COVID-19 Pandemic

The concept of Green HRM is multifaceted and includes a series of initiatives put in place by organizations for their success. For instance, [63] note that the Green HRM practices are best achieved by focusing on the recruitment strategies, employees selection process, performance management, training and development, rewards, and employment. In addition, the employee relations harnessing the pro-environmental behaviors and building a more environmentally sustainable organizational culture. This result is affirmed by [64] which note that the process involves an increased inclusion of social and environmental responsibilities by their organizations' adaptation to green human practices. The identified implications are essential for appreciating the human side of environmental management and contributing to sustainable human resource management. GHRM is similarly involved in establishing an appropriate corporate reputation fostering all employees' inclusion in environmental strategies, and ensuring they are successfully motivated actively in the green activities.

[2] study evaluated how the practices are applicable in the leading Indian Banks in the COVID-19 pandemic. The study evidenced that the process effectively ensures multiple stakeholders' inclusion in the successful COVID-19 pandemic management and organization initiatives. This is showed by integrating the HRM activities with their goals and objectives in a short and long-term strategy. The business model is famously applied by the UN-mandated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A successful organization in integrating the GHRM system is identified by [65] to positively achieve organization environmental performance and holistic empowerment of all their employees towards embracing the holistic environmental conservation process. This finding is nevertheless a significant challenge since [66] identify the GHRM a substantially evolving and changing in the past decade. GHRM with future evolving is evident and highlights the COVID-19 on the business survival and society in a generalized strategy. Figure 1 shows their effects on the GHRM successful strategy with all issues mitigated.

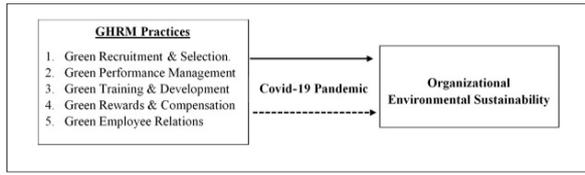


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

3. CONCLUSIONS

According to the literature, Green HRM plays a substantial role and a positive contribution to environmental sustainability. The concept places importance on both staff and firms to work together in keeping the environment and improve organizational performance. The current COVID-19 pandemic has significantly altered how people operate, and employees execute their organization roles. Through GHRM strategies in the current COVID-19 pandemic, organizations can balance the economic, social, and environmental goals of organizations directly contributing to improving global recovery from the pandemic. Though its practices are new, Green Human Resource (GHR) efforts focus on eliminating and reducing environmental waste, revamping HR procedures, tools, products to achieve lower cost and greater efficiency. This study, therefore, believes, organizations must take understanding the significance of GHRM and incorporate GHR practices into their organizational strategies, plans, and policies. The bottom line is implementing an organization's green management and sustainability efforts while involving all employees. Besides, the HR department is also affected by green issues. As a result, they need to integrate the green problems and practices into the various HR activities and decisions they make daily. This study hopes to encourage a deeper understanding of GHRM and its practices in addressing environmental issues in firms. The study, therefore, calls upon thorough studies on the applicability, roles, impacts, and practices of GHRM on environmental sustainability.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Regarding recommendations, these include investment in the following strategies;

Capacity development in the organization; thus, all the stakeholders are aware of the scope of change and the resources that need to be put in place for their operations.

Post-COVID Environment impact assessment for understanding the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic directly impacts their business/assets/employees and in this line putting into account the need for expeditious measures for their revival. Since the majority of the employees have a high possibility of suffering from mental and emotional stress in the current COVID-19 pandemic, the HR department is supposed to ensure they are closely watching and rendering essential counseling and supporting the employees, and harnessing employees wellbeing and productivity levels.

The necessity for embracing change that targeting appropriate setting and success in performance management. In the current and future COVID-19 pandemic, this would focus on a particular business environment and engaging all stakeholders in successful GHRM initiatives

As a future best practice, it is essential to ensure that the study involves multiple stakeholders since the issue of environmental sustainability is a constant concept and constantly changing. Instead of only focusing on secondary sources, primary data is also essential, which can be sourced and later be supported by the existing secondary data. The outcomes would be used in making relevant decisions that would harness the success of GHRM initiatives by how the rewards and career development succeed.

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